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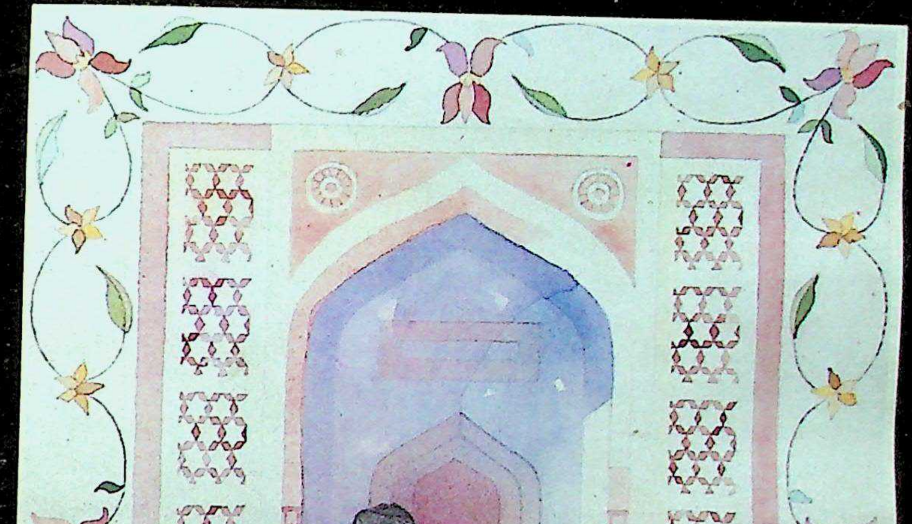

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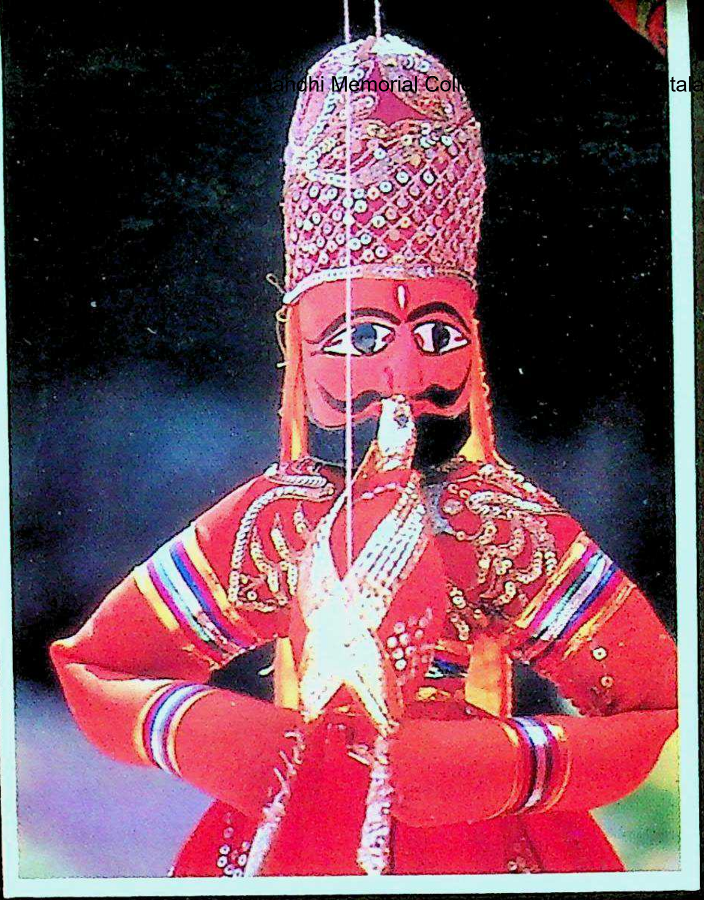

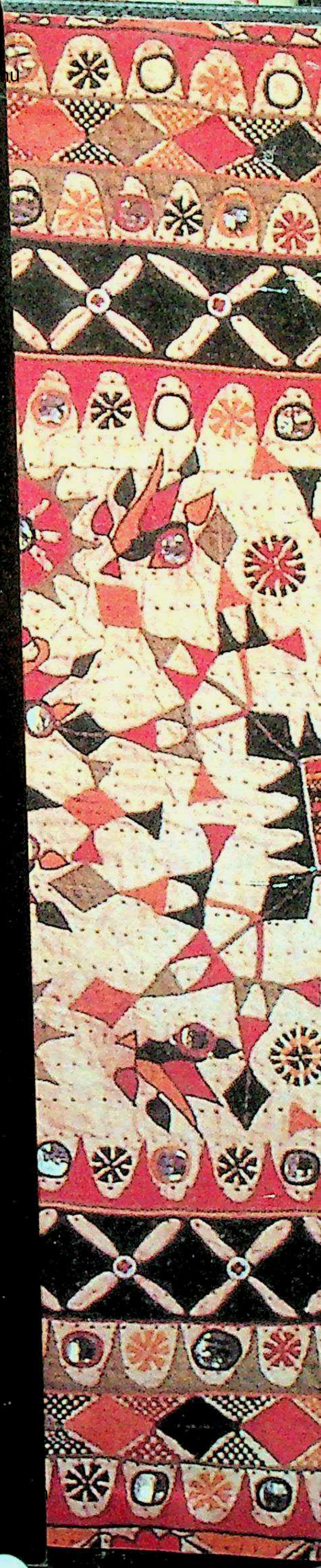

A Portable INDIA

A candid exposure to India, with its extraordinary variety, *A Portable India* is more than a mere treatise or a travel guide. It is a perceptive, insightful, selective and lavishly illustrated collection of articles on India. The approach is lucid, comprehensive, and often highly individualistic. The eminent contributors are a mixed bag, each famous in his/her own sphere, and in the wonderful diversity of their writing they explore the essence of India.

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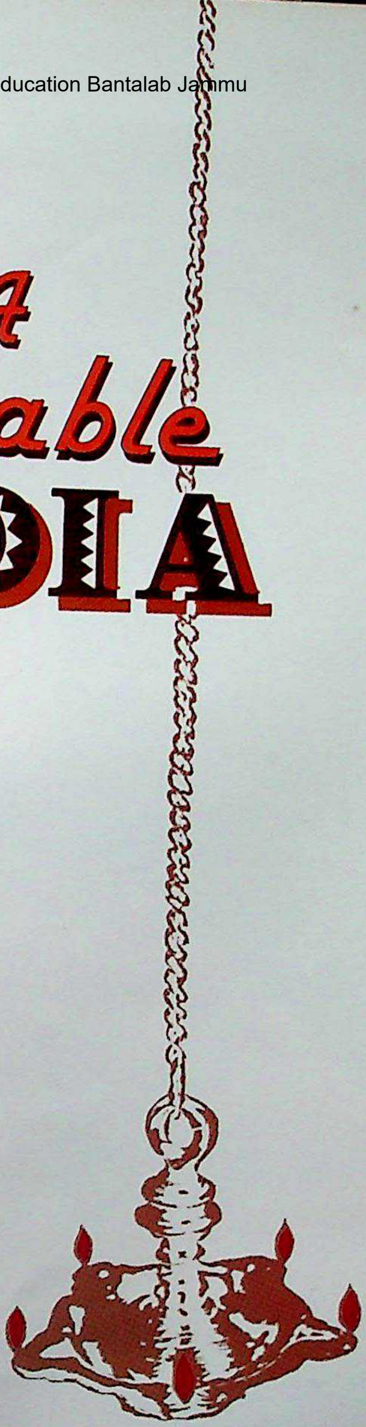

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A Portable INDIA

Editors
Jug Suraiya and Anurag Mathur

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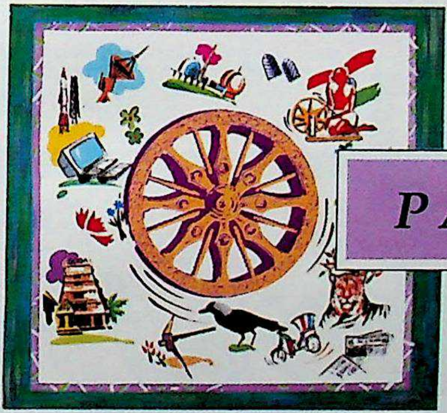

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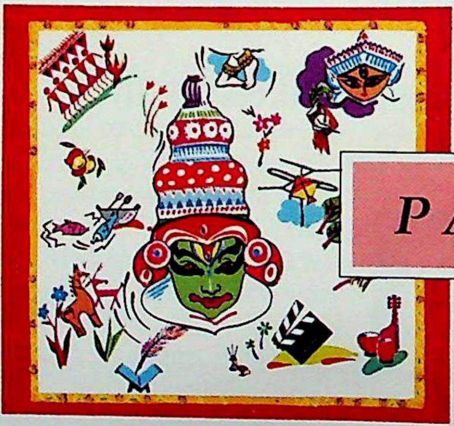

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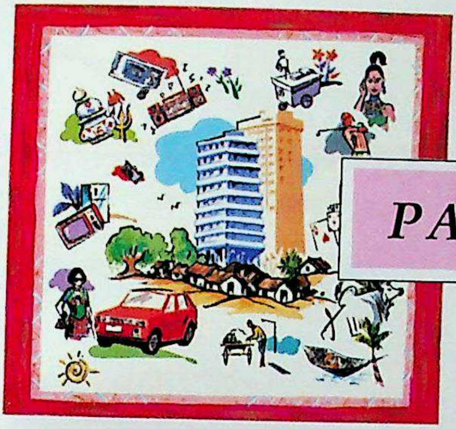

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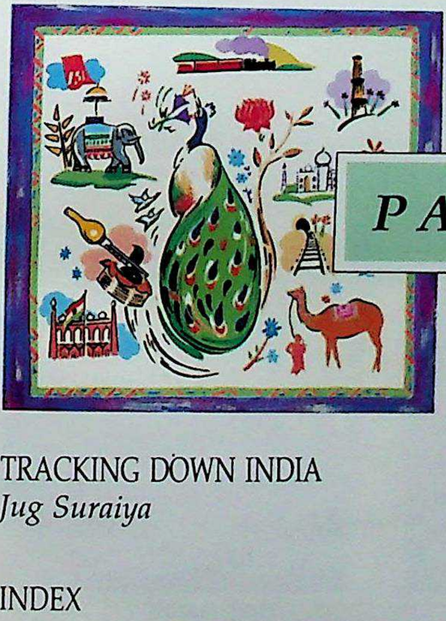

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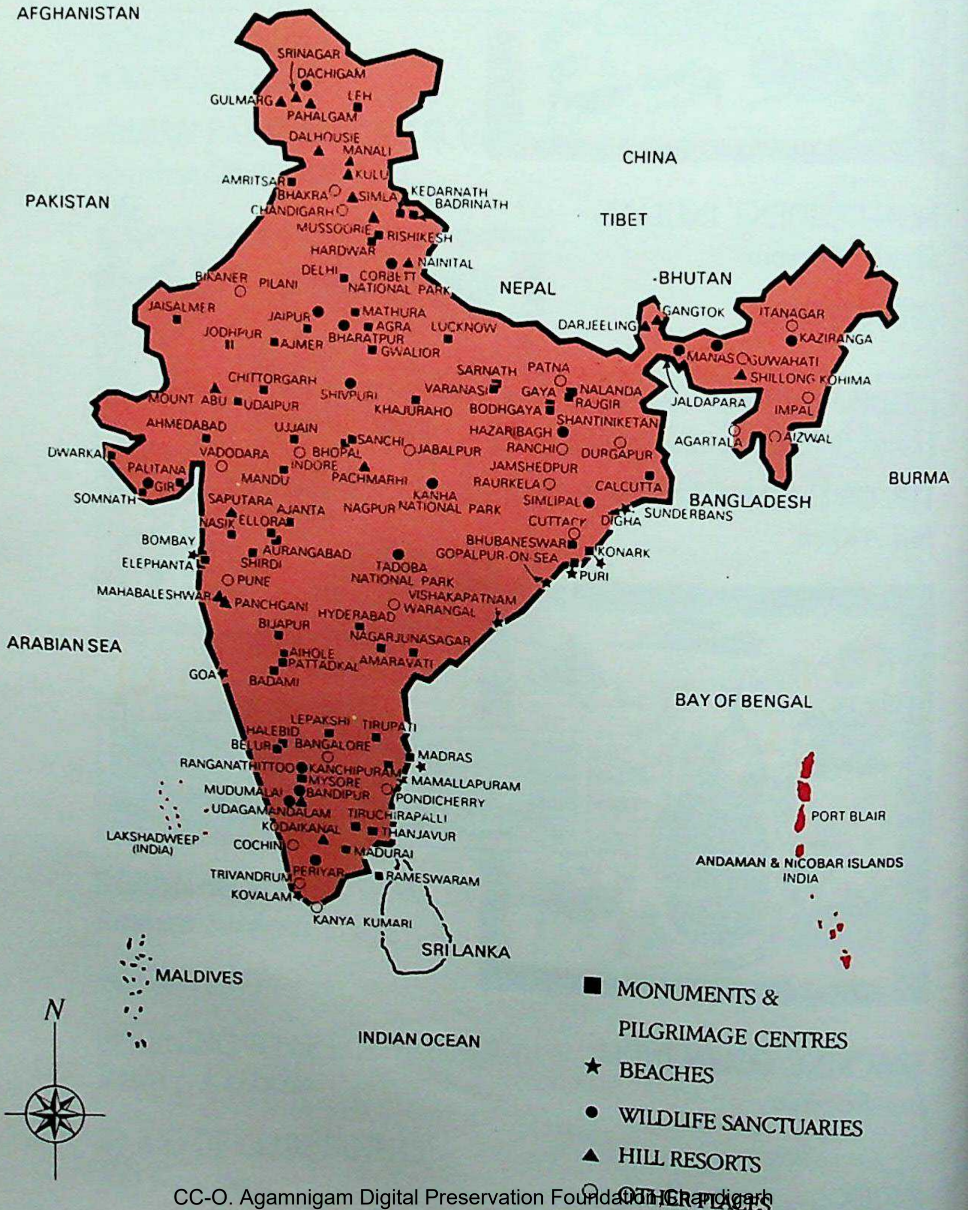
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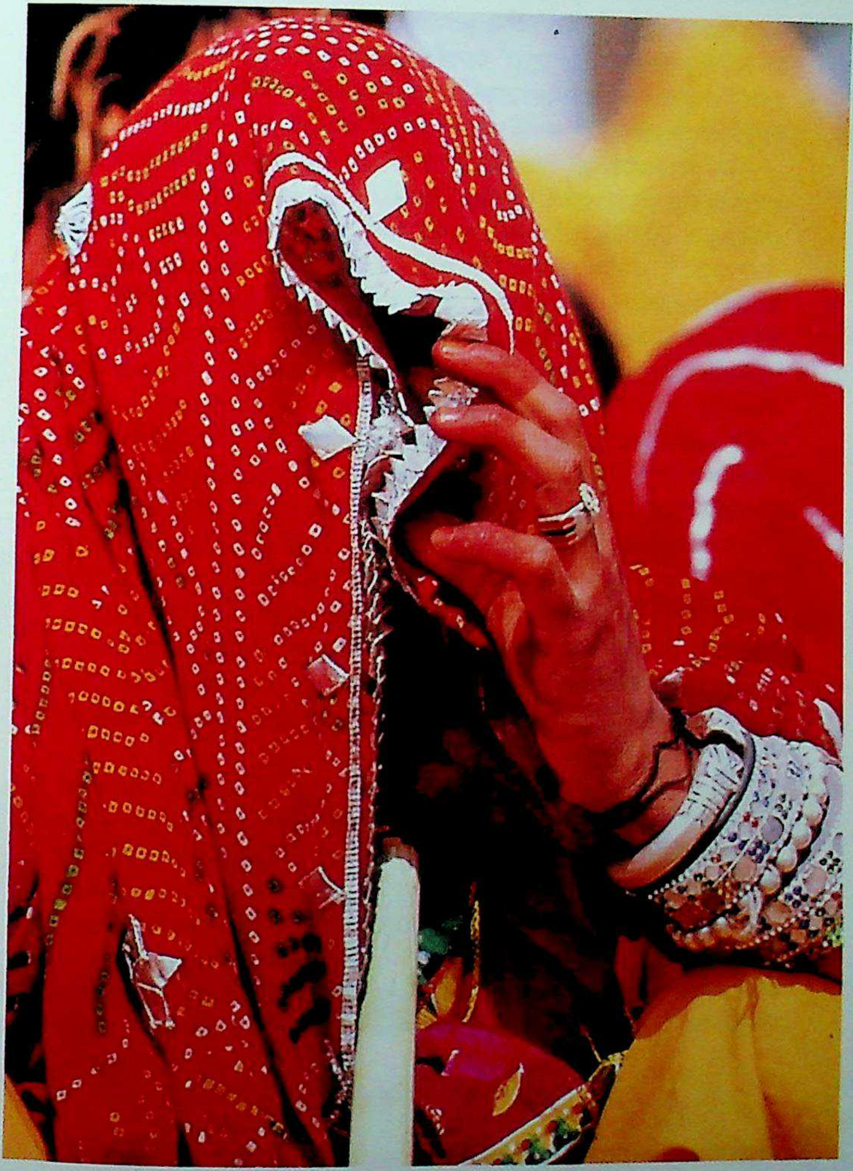
INTRODUCTION



THOSE who try to encapsulate India in a convenient definition run into problems. What *is* India?

Is it a geographical entity, a land mass; a young nation imperfectly grafted on to an ancient civilisation; a functioning anarchy: the world's most populous democracy; a complex design of peoples and cultures interwoven on the loom of a tradition which recreates itself each day? It is all this, and much else besides.

In an age when nations and cultures undergo an unprecedented identity crisis in the face of sweeping political, social, economic and technological changes that threaten to obliterate established boundaries, the quest for India gains wider significance. Here is a community, as large as Western Europe and of much greater diversity, which continues to preserve its distinctive character despite — or perhaps because of — its own internal contradictions and schisms : poverty and affluence; modernity and timelessness; caste and creed; science and spirituality.

How does it survive, against all odds? This obstinate survival is the real Indian rope-trick. As in the case of the rope-trick, perhaps the answer lies in an illusion, a creative act of the imagination whereby India constantly reinvents itself, as Dr. Arvind N.Das suggests in his keynote essay, to encompass the changing circumstances which seek to circumscribe it.

If India is indeed a trick of the mind, a mental perspective rather than a physical landscape, it might help to explain how it travels so well. From Gandhian philosophy to the films of Satyajit Ray, from "curry and chips" to the chanting of the Hare Krishna movement, India has exported a variety of commodities, tangible and otherwise, for consumption at various levels. Perhaps nothing demonstrates India's portability as convincingly as the NRI (Non-Resident Indian) diaspora which has spread offshoots of the Indian family tree across the world, to flourish in farflung and often inimical climates, without losing the roots that sustain it.

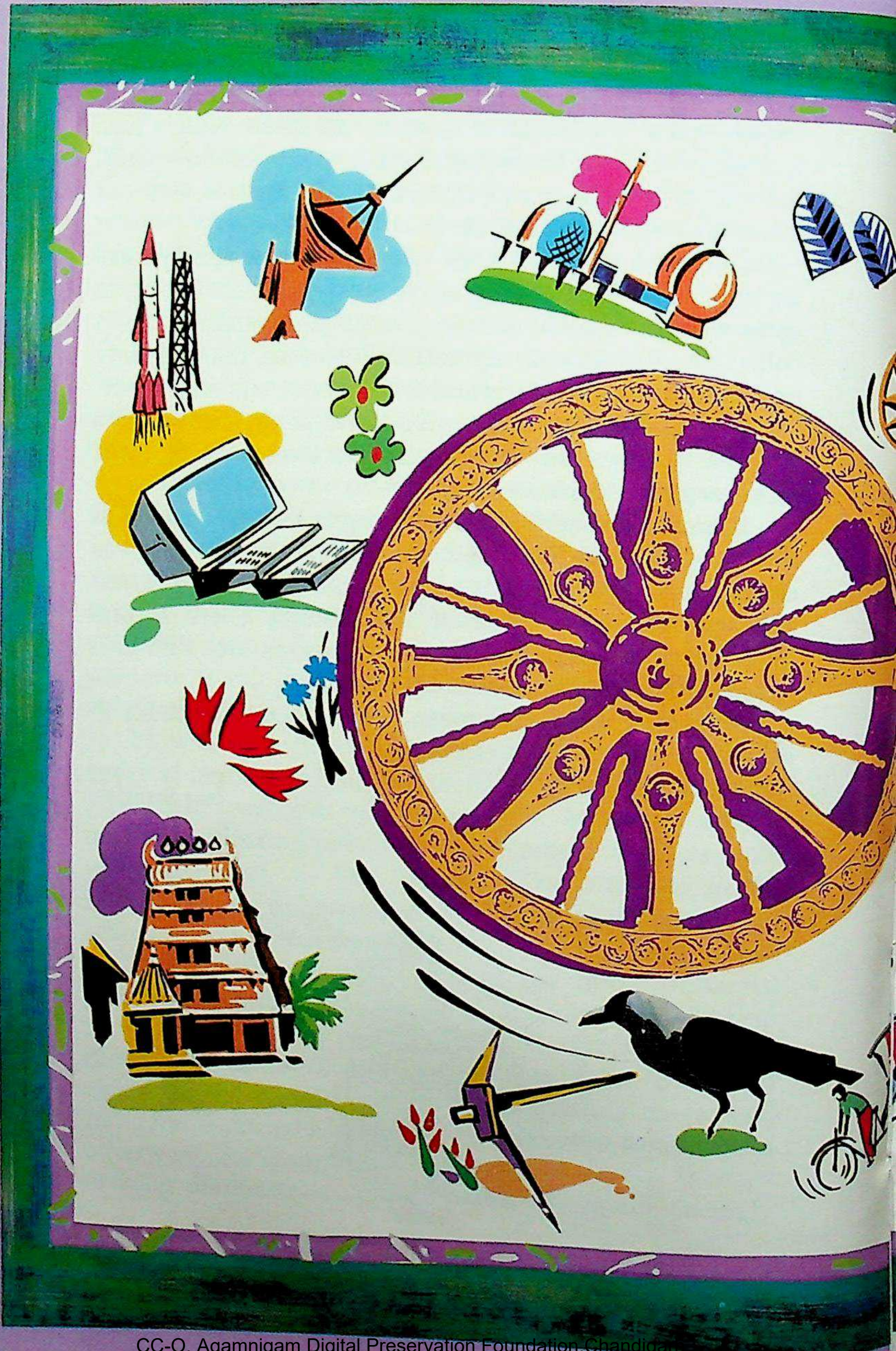
As its title suggests, this book is an attempt to trace some of these roots. It does not pretend to be a comprehensive guide to the Indian phenomenon. In a collection of articles on art and architecture, the economy and the industry, festivals and folkways, music and dance, lifestyles and foreign policy, food and films, mass media and sports, travel and tourism, it seeks to act as a signpost to an ongoing destination.

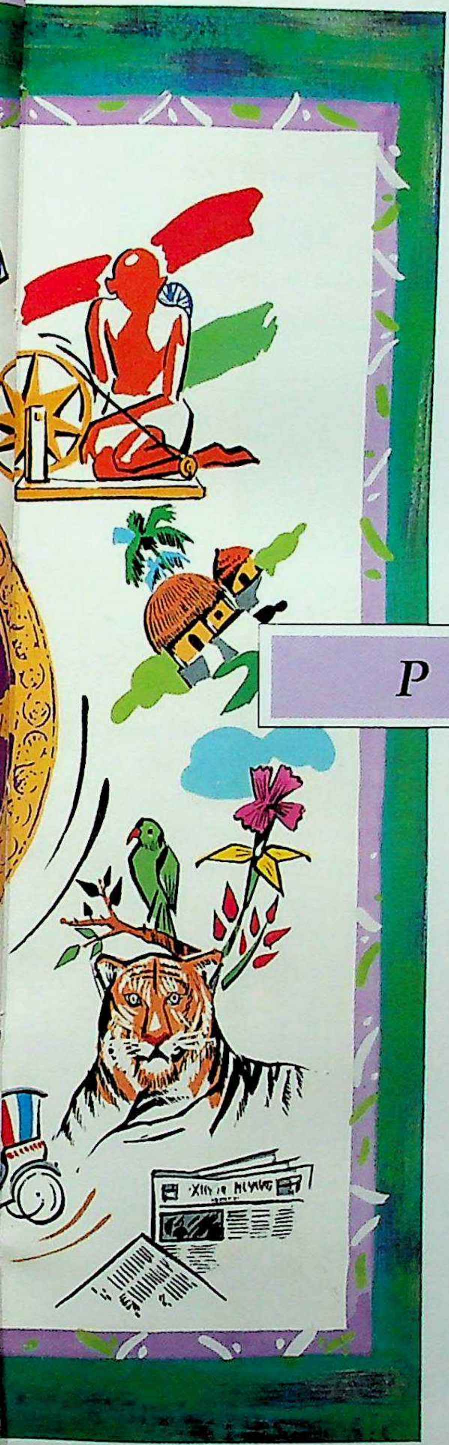
The contributors are noted experts or aficionados in their respective fields. Their approach to their themes is deliberately subjective; the views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editors. There is one qualification in common; the contributions are, first and last, incontrovertibly Indian in essence.

And what that might mean, we leave to the reader to judge.

Jug Suraiya

Anurag Mathur





INVENTING INDIA

STATE OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

PART ONE

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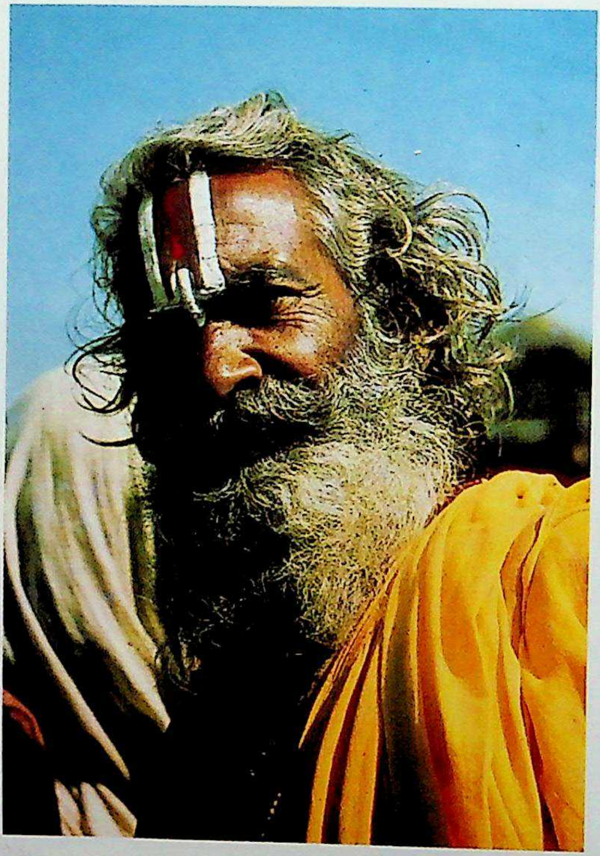
INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

ENVIRONMENT

THE INDIAN PRESS

INVENTING INDIA

ARVIND N. DAS



ARVIND N. DAS is Editor (Research) of The Times of India. He has been a Professor at the Centre for Social Studies, Surat, and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Asian Studies, Amsterdam, and Institute for Developing Economies, Tokyo. He has published several books on agrarian and other issues and has coordinated the research for and publication of The Times of India sesquicentennial series of books.

"HISTORIANS", says the noted historian Eric Hobsbawm, "are to nationalism what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to heroin-addicts : we supply the essential raw material for the market." This would be an expected statement from a professional peddler of the past. That it has been made by such a critical intellectual as Professor Hobsbawm who has studied nationalisms not as subjects of the past but as projects of the future is surprising indeed. Perhaps it is for that reason that even as practised a historian as Hobsbawm moves on from discussing nationalism to examining ethnicity as the more interesting, and less hallucinatory, formation in present-day contexts.

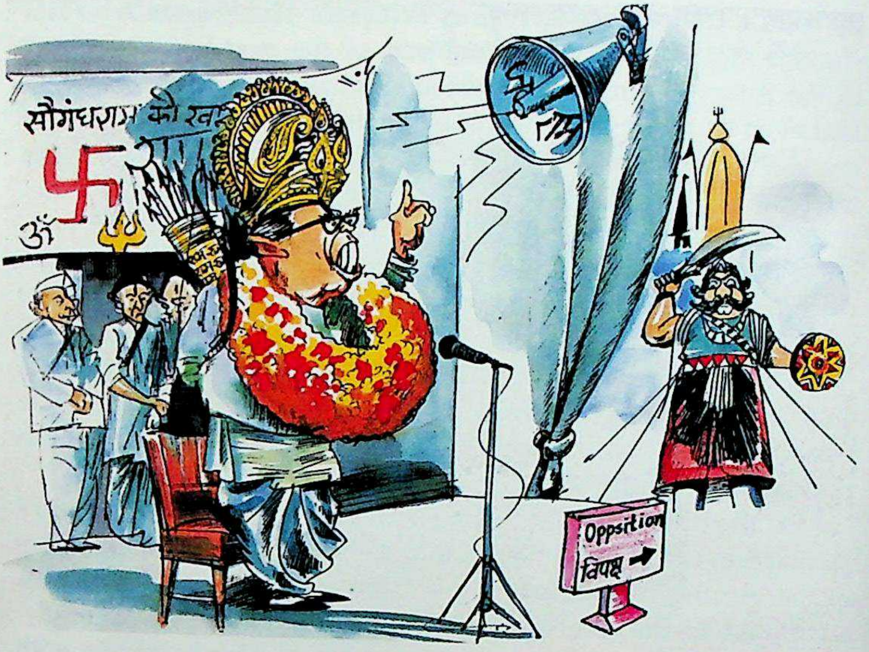
It is difficult to identify the constituents of a nation today. One day, the Soviet Union is seen as an impregnable national fortress protected by an iron curtain, homogenizing its inhabitants through an ordered mix of ideology, culture, economics and politics. The next day it has splintered into fragments. The fission is attributed to the over-centralizing characteristics of the previous regime.

On the other side, one day Yugoslavia is seen as a voluntary association of different nationalities. The next day, it disappears in the gunfire of its mutually warring ethnicities. Its fission is attributed to the over-federalised nature of its constitution.

Today, as Azeris argue with Armenians, Turks tangle with Turkmans, Serbs slaughter Croatians, Slovaks chechmate their former compatriots and the Olympics are staged in "the country of Catalonia", one wonders if memories of the past, history, creates "nations" on merely mutually destructive "ethnicities".

The other side of the picture — the re-unification of Germany, the suspension of belligerence between the Flemish and French-speaking Belgians, the electoral discomfiture of the Scottish nationalists and the overall integration of Europe in a supra-national formation — also gives the lie to the idea that the processes of contemporary history create "nations". Markets are not identical with nations and the worship of Mammon is only a barbaric substitute for the affirmation of the ideals of nationhood.

"What makes a nation," says Hobsbawm, "*is* the past, what justifies one nation against others is the past". This is still conventional wisdom. Hobsbawm himself goes on to say that it is not the real reconstructed and analysed past, the history of professional academic historians that nationalists want; what they need is retrospective mythology. Our own homegrown garden-variety saffron nationalists who premise their ideology



Myths and Legends

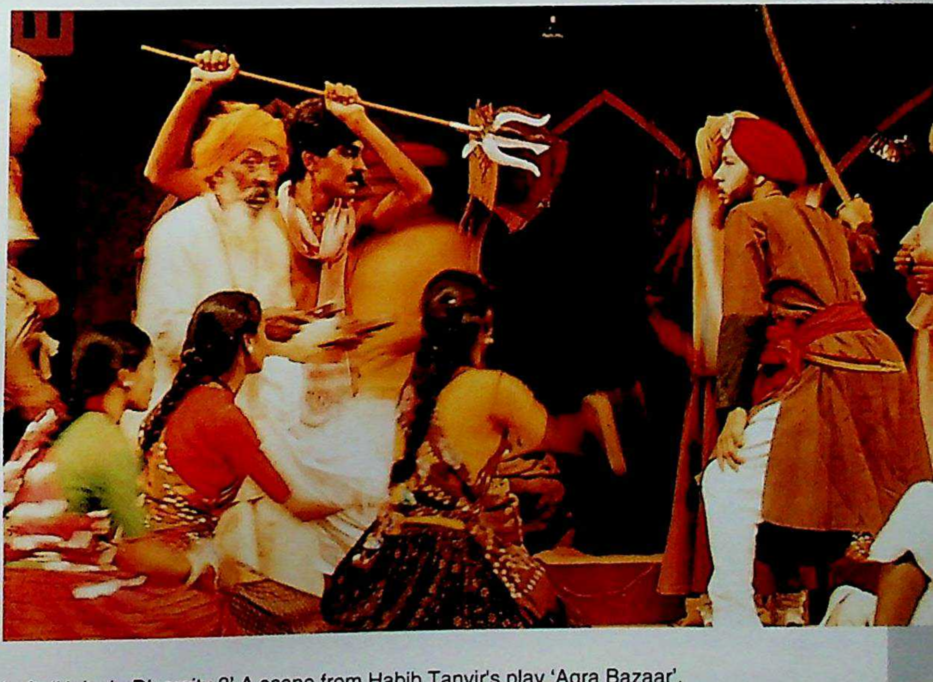
on myth and legend make this amply clear : it is not history that moves them but mythology.

Indeed, historically, the project of nationalism has not been linked to the past but to the future. In post-Napoleonic nineteenth century Europe, nations were created not because they were justified by tribal ancestry but on account of the contemporary needs and prospective visions of local bourgeoisies. Thus, the transformation of France into the nation of the French, the self-conscious distinction of the Dutch from their linguistic ancestry which was linked to the Deutsch, the "blood and iron" of Bismarck and the futuristic republican idealism of Mazzini and Garibaldi were geared not to some misty memory of a past identity but to the requirements of their own times and projections for the future

Even in the twentieth century, despite the verbiage that often surrounded them, real-time nationalisms in the colonised part of the world asserted themselves as future-oriented anti-imperialist ideology rather than as the yearning for distant pasts.

In fact, one of the ideological contradictions that developed was between the universalist, non-nationalist premises of philosophical Marxism and the anti-imperialist and consequently nationalist orientation of its political manifestation. The uneasy relationship between the idea that "workers have no nation" and the nation-based organisation of avowedly workers' regimes resulted in subverting the very foundations of socialist theory in actual practice. In any event, even this distorted "socialist nationalism" demonstrated that it was oriented towards the present and the future more than it was based on a historical analysis of the past.

In the Indian context, more clearly than in any other, nationhood has less to do with history than with contemporary politics, economics and even geography. It is a truism, but nevertheless a truth, that historically India has been a geo-



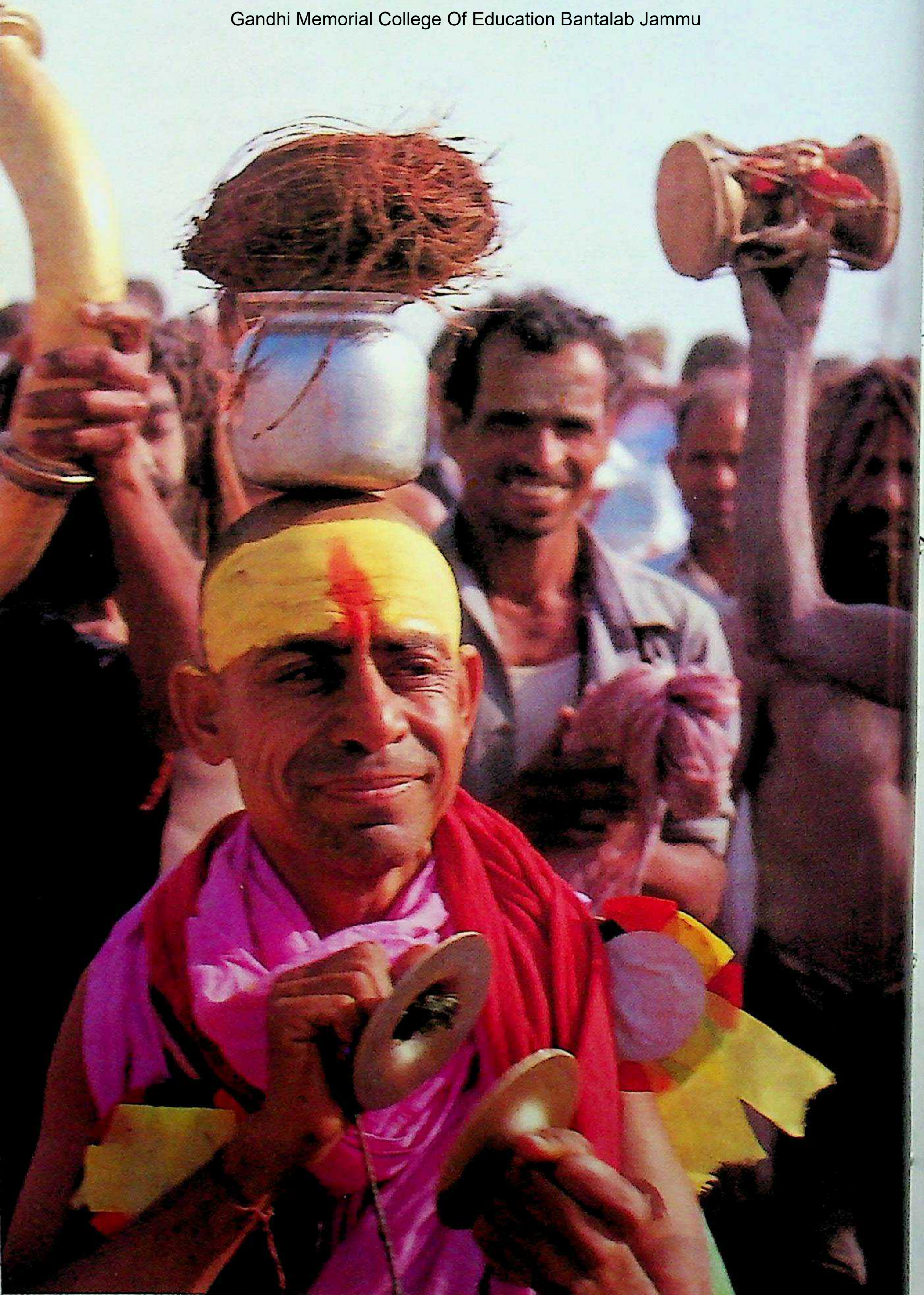
Left: 'Unity in Diversity ?' A scene from Habib Tanvir's play 'Agra Bazaar'.

Election campaign.

graphical rather than cultural or political entity. Its much talked of "unity in diversity" is a desirable *project* rather than an actual reality. And, Indian nationhood is not an accomplished historical fact; at best it is a nation-in-the-making. What shape this emergent nation takes, both physically and politico-culturally, is not historically determined but very much a matter of conscious choice to be exercised by its constituents.

Massim d'Azeglio had said after Italy was politically unified: "We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians." Those who in 1949 created a Constitution of independent and modern India, a system that sets the parameters for the definition of nationhood, could well have echoed d'Azeglio. Through a variety of historical circumstances India had been made; what was, and is, still necessary however is to make Indians.

Republic Day celebrations , New Delhi.
The new Constitution of Independent India was adopted on January 26th, 1950.



On the face of it, there is little reason why such a people — modern Indians — should allow themselves to be made. More than in any other context in any other part of the world, the people so sought to be created are dangerously fragmented. Caste, class, religion, region, language, tribe — all these and more are so deeply embedded in the consciousness of Indians that it is a wonder that the project of their self-definition as Indians is at all thought to be practicable. Indeed, the weak of political imagination have given up the project altogether and, having thereby deprived themselves of the security of nationalism and patriotism, have sought sociological shelter behind the tattered conceptual covering of "ethnicities". Among those who have got tired of the State-oriented project of nation-building and have not yet discovered that the same endeavour can be made autonomously by civil society, the "reality" of tangible ethnicity is often posited against the relatively less easily graspable ideal of nationalism. They see and feel ethnicity; nationalism has to be imagined and imagining does put a strain on the simple-minded.

In terms of social sciences, while nationalism belongs to the intricate world of political theory, ethnicity is part of the more accessible, descriptive disciplines of sociology and social anthropology. In the Indian context, the identification of castes or tribes is easy: it requires no more than Parsonian pedantry to cast sociological nets in the turbulent waters for the familiar fishes of caste, tribe, ritual groups and linguistic ethnicities to come tumbling in. Conceptualising a nation is much more difficult because it involves a journey cutting through geography as much as through history.

However, in the currently fashionable world of uni-polar academics, history is a bit of an embarrassment. At least one set of inspired academics see no need to even try to come to terms with history in defining a nation; they take the easier way out and restrict themselves to savouring ethnicities.

There is a deep significance that lurks behind this deliberate a-historicity. When peoples are severed from their pasts as well as from their vision of futures, it is possible to do two things simultaneously.

First, it becomes possible to turn politically potentially explosive history into a-septic, innocuous philistine antiquarianism — a mere eye-catcher for fleeting tourists and scattered bric-a-brac fit for display in the drawing-rooms of the ethnically chic.

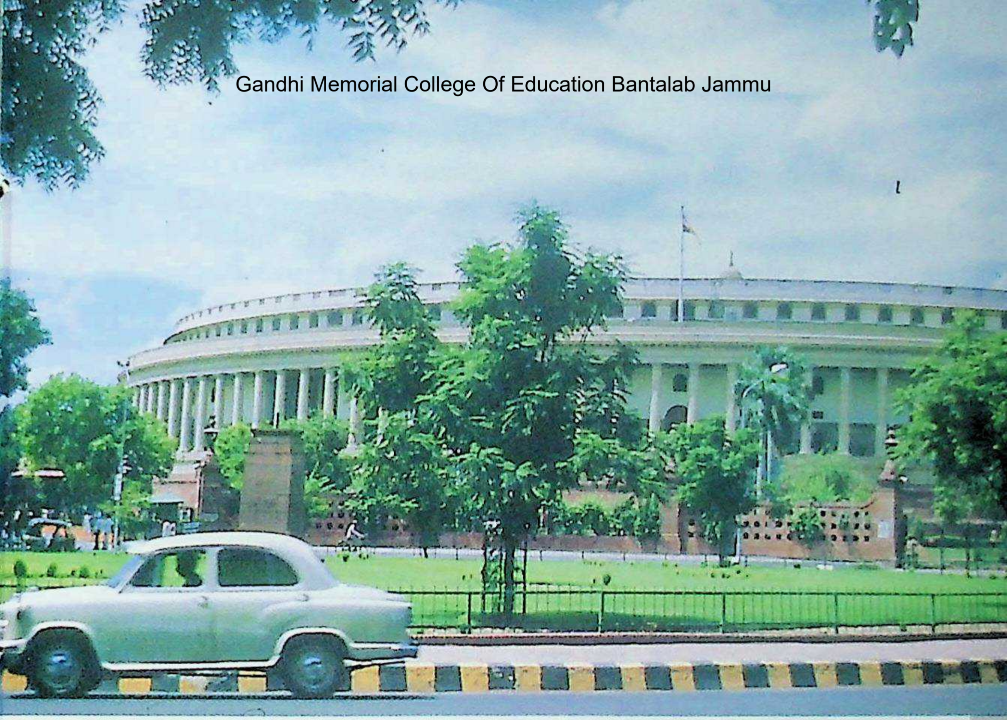
Second, by divorcing nationalism from history, ideology from its antecedents, it also becomes possible to suggest that all historically evolved nations are merely chimerical manifestations, the crows of ethnicities masquerading under the peacock feathers of nations. Therefore it becomes possible to justify the transformation of the nations of Europe into a mere market on the one side and the fragmentation of other nations into mutually destructive ethnicities engaged in internecine conflict.

Most important, it also becomes possible through this exercise of a-historical scholarship to suggest that the only viable nation, one which has no history and one where the "common American dream of the good life" binds different ethnicities under one political project is the United States of America. Unipolarity and global domination by "God's own country" are sought to be made morally justifiable. The real is thought to be also rational. Further, following this US-centric view of the organisation of the world, it becomes possible for those non-US scholars too, who clothe their ideas in the discarded hand-me-downs of the Big Brother, to try to dismiss history and hence ideology as the constituents of nations and focus attention on mere ethnicities, the easy categorizationsof peoples on the basis of the simplistic "We—Them" dichotomy.

However, history is not so easily got rid of. Like Banquo's ghost, it pops up unexpectedly to disturb the feasts of its liquidators. This is particularly so in a situation as obtains in India.

Undoubtedly there are the "We—Them" ethnicities here; indeed their number is legion. Undoubtedly too there are the primitive ideologues of religion , language and caste who do their best to perpetuate and deepen such dichotomies. On the flip side of the coin of such vulgar identity-creators are the impressions of those who suggest that neither ethnicity nor nation matters in the end; what prevails is the mere operation of the market, the invisible hand obliterating all other values, needs and social organisations.

This coin of anti-historical, anti-ideological and anti-national analyses however is proved to be counterfeit currency when



Above: The Parliament House, New Delhi.
The Constitution of India gives its citizen the right to vote and elect its representatives.

examined under the light of rationality. The theory of the market providing the only determinant of collective identities is self-contradictory: the market has, by definition, no use for collectivities; it is inherently atomistic, divisive and individualistic. Further, globalization of the market is premised on the destruction of nations, homogenization of ethnicities and obliteration of the multi-varied particularities and specificities which different peoples have experienced and constructed historically. Even the market is different in the wastefully competitive United States and in the synergy-drawing corporativist Japan; Harshad Mehta and AI Capone remain distinct and the apparent similarities between the minimalist political economy of Calvin Coolidge and P.V. Narasimha Rao are in fact illusory and hide deep dissimilarities. Thus, the ideology of the uni-polar global market can neither homogenize the world nor, in our own specific case, obliterate Indian nationhood.

At the same time, the atavistic urges of the peddlers of distinct ethnicities can also not succeed in fragmenting Indian nationhood. While it is obviously simplistic to think of India as based on an idyllic composite culture, a representation of the cliche of "unity in diversity", it is not unreasonable to premise India on the existence of a number of "fuzzy communities" existing more or less symbiotically and engaged in the deliberate project of creating an ideology of the nation. The Constitution is the first formal step in that direction.

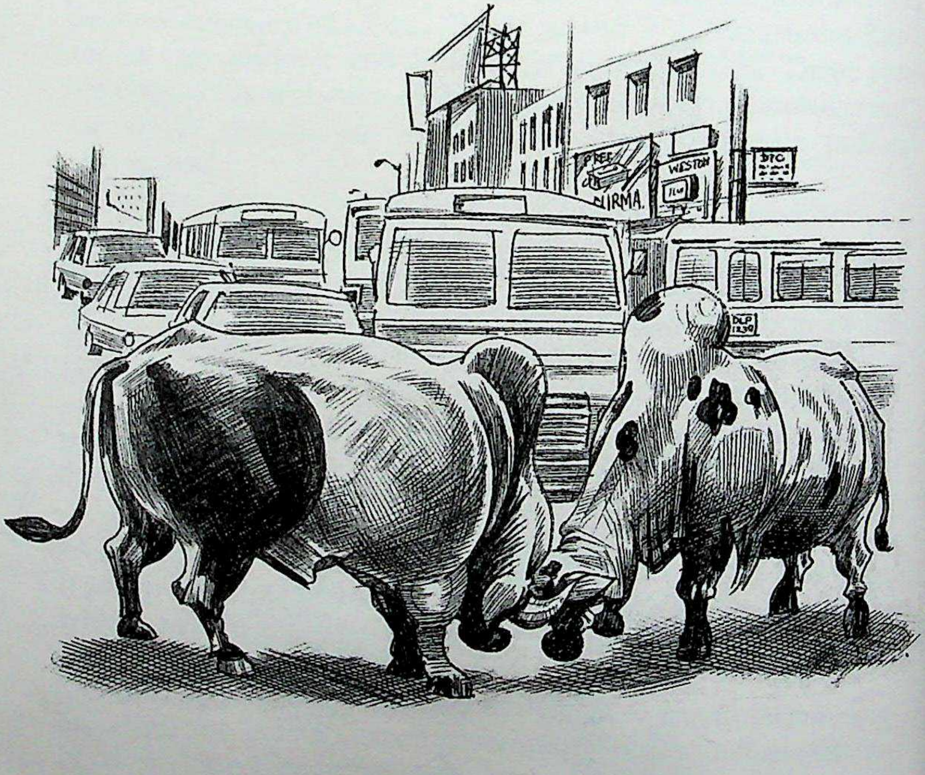
With all its imperfections, the Constitution takes into account Indian's various diversities, pluralities and specificities. It also posits the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, ideals which are difficult to achieve but which make the very struggle for achieving them worthwhile.

Most significantly, the very system of electoral democracy on which the Indian Constitution and therefore Indian nationhood is based provides the most stable mode of conflict resolution and promotes collective goal-seeking. In spite of all its limitations, electoral democracy produces a ready-made machine for minority groups to fight effectively for a share of central resources, once they learn to act as groups.

The best thing as far as the existence of India is concerned is its very plurality of many component groups. If all are in a minority of one kind or another, the patterns of dominance are kaleidoscopic : change is inherent and it is change that provides the promise of achieving the ideal. It is when one social set, which has distorted history, proclaims itself a permanent majority and seeks to impose a majoritarian scheme of things that the entity of India is endangered. India follows the fuzzy logic which the most advanced computer systems are grappling with. To try to understand it with primitive simplicity is self-defeating. To try to cast it in simple moulds is in fact dangerous.

STATE OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY

SUBIR ROY



SUBIR ROY is currently Business Editor of The Times of India. He went to Calcutta Boys' School and read Economics at Presidency College, Calcutta. He has earlier worked for Sunday magazine and The Telegraph, both of Calcutta, and also for State Bank of India, specialising in international banking. He is 44 and married, with a son and a daughter.

THE Indian economy faithfully reflects the strong duality that marks Indian society and polity. It is both antediluvian and modern, inefficient and efficient and working and non-functional at the same time. Parts of it have not changed for millennia, others are right at the forefront of technology. Its endemic problems are the bane of its managers, yet there is almost nothing that it cannot do. Traversing the range of Indian economic activities is like travelling across the country, a journey both in time and space.

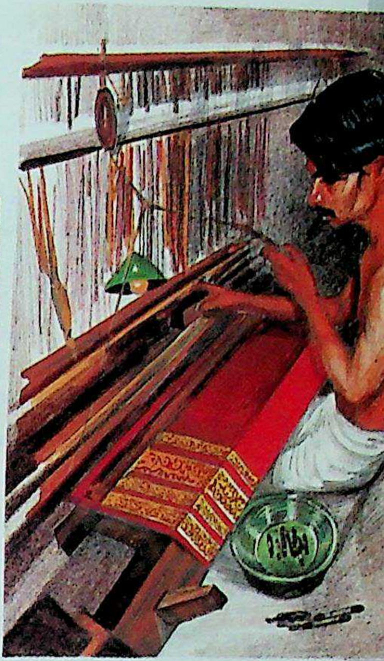
By all normal measures, the Indian economy is near the bottom of international league tables. In per capita income terms, it is better off than sub-Saharan Africa, Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and not much else. Even by the world development index, which lays stress on the overall quality of life rather than just income, the Indian economy does not fare much better. A good third of the Indian population lives below the poverty line, being unable to afford a minimum basket of goods and services. Nearly a half is still illiterate and many villages do not have access to safe drinking water. This makes them vulnerable to water-borne diseases even as they have next to no medical facilities to support them.

On the other hand, India has a burgeoning middle class whose population equals that of the European Community and is today a prime target of the manufacturers of many international consumer brands. The Indian economy is widely diversified and sophisticated, with considerable industrialization made possible by its own machine-building industry. Being a large country which is reasonably well endowed with a variety of resources, the economy is largely self-sufficient. Foreign trade accounts for only 16 per cent of it's GDP, compared to 80 per cent for Japan and 25 per cent for the US. India can produce atomic energy from nuclear reactors designed by itself, it is now installing huge thermal power plants of 500 MW capacity, built by itself, and Indian industries like textiles, sugar and cement largely run on machinery made in the country itself. Most importantly, India can design and build large steel mills entirely on its own and has designed and put on the market its own super computer, *Param*.

Indian economic prowess is best illustrated by the quality and sophistication of Indian skills. One of the most promising

Above : Steel plant. Below : Tea gardens.

Right : Craftsperson — sophistication of Indian skills.
Below : The inside of a watch factory.



growth areas for exports currently is computer software and a major part of this income comes from the export of manpower, i.e., Indian software developers going over to work for foreign users. What is more, multinational companies with a strong base in India like Unilever, Citibank and Alcan are increasingly sourcing some of their senior managers from India. This underlines the level of managerial skills available in the economy, particularly with large private companies, which have been the main engine of growth since the late eighties.

The last decade of the eighties has been the most successful so far for the Indian economy but ended calamitously with the country in late 1990-early 1991, tottering on the brink of bankruptcy by nearly defaulting on its international debt. The decade witnessed the highest rate of growth so far: 5.3 per cent. It was widely remarked that India had at last broken out of the straitjacket of the "Hindu" rate of growth, three per cent plus, which had marked its economic experience in the previous three decades. This better economic performance in the eighties was also accompanied by a fall in the level of poverty, with a good

10 per cent being brought above the poverty line. But the latter half of the decade was marked by two growing imbalances which gnawed at the vitals of the economic system — a fiscal and an external imbalance. The fiscal deficit as a percentage of GDP rose to over 8 per cent and the decade also ended with sharply rising foreign borrowing and debt service ratio. By the end of the financial year 1991, India was $ 70 billion in debt to the outside world. The latest research has put the foreign debt at a colossal $ 90 billion.

In fact, it has been argued that the high growth of the eighties was not sufficiently broadbased, deriving much of its sustenance from newer sectors like consumer electronics and new generation automotives. What is more, much of it was very

Ministerial concern for the poor ?

import-intensive. The period was also marked by the introduction of many well-known international consumer brands, marking a cultural break with the earlier thrifty ethos.

While the growing needs of the newly emerging middle class were being met in this manner, the government was seeking to keep the poverty of the rest at bay by importing such scarce items of mass consumption as edible oils and pulses, the poor man's protein. Exports were also growing faster than in the past but not enough to keep pace with imports. Some of this export growth was illusory, as it was in rupees to the eastern bloc countries, thus not earning any hard currency. The rupee trade also lowered the hard currency import bill by bringing in oil and non-ferrous metals but the surplus in the rupee account went to pay for armament imports and amortization of past Soviet loans.

The growing trade deficit and the reducing surplus from invisibles created serious pressures in the economy as the eighties drew to a close. If left uncorrected, these would have wrecked the system in time but the process was hastened by three adverse developments in 1990, part fortuitous and part the wages of past sins. One purely fortuitous development was the Gulf war resulting from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This led to skyrocketing world oil prices. Another exogenous development—coming from outside the economic sphere—was the political turmoil affecting the country in the form of the "Mandir-Mandal" agitations. A caste conflict resulting from affirmative action aimed at securing jobs for "backward classes" (implementation of the Mandal commission's recommendations and an inter-religious conflict resulting from Hindu fundamentalists seeking to demolish a mosque and build a temple in place what is supposed to be the birthplace of Lord Ram—brought the government of V.P. Singh to its knees and overthrew it. The resultant civil disturbances brought the economy to a halt for nearly three months.

The third, and last adverse development, was the fall in domestic oil output because of a mixture of earlier mismanagement (overexploited wells had to be shut down to save them), political turmoil in the north-east and current mismanagement. From late 1990 to May 1991, when for all practical purposes a caretaker government held the fort, India lived from hand to mouth, trying to stem the reserves outflow with severe import restrictions and at times warding off the ignominy of default by selling its gold stocks abroad.

The minority government of P.V. Narasimha Rao that came to power in June 1991 after fresh elections had little to recommend itself but has managed to initiate the most drastic economic reforms in the history of the Indian republic. These reforms continued for two years, at the end of which the economy was internationally perceived to be on the mend. This quick turnaround is in fact typical of India, directionless and floundering most of the time but able to smartly recover from the severest of crises because of its inherent strengths.

The reforms and their initial progess are worth detailing. First, there were two successive devaluations in early July, depreciating the Indian rupee by 18 per cent. Later that month came the first new style budget and the new industrial policy which began dismantling the elaborate licensing system. The budget cut on various subsidies, including those for exports, and initiated a process of fiscal consolidation, reining in deficit financing as a result of which inflation was raging at around 15 per cent. As part of the move to also resolve the balance of payments crisis, India soon agreed to an adjustment programme with the IMF and a standby facility for $ 2.3 billion. (By June 1991 reserves had fallen to a mere $ 1.1 billion.) A new initiative in trade policy linked import entitlement to export performance through the creation of the tradeable exim scrip and reduced physical import controls. For the better part of 1991 the Indian economy was marked by very high interest rates, general financial stringency and severe import restrictions. Fiscal 1992 eventually recorded a paltry growth of 1.4 per cent, compared to the previous year's 5.2 per cent.

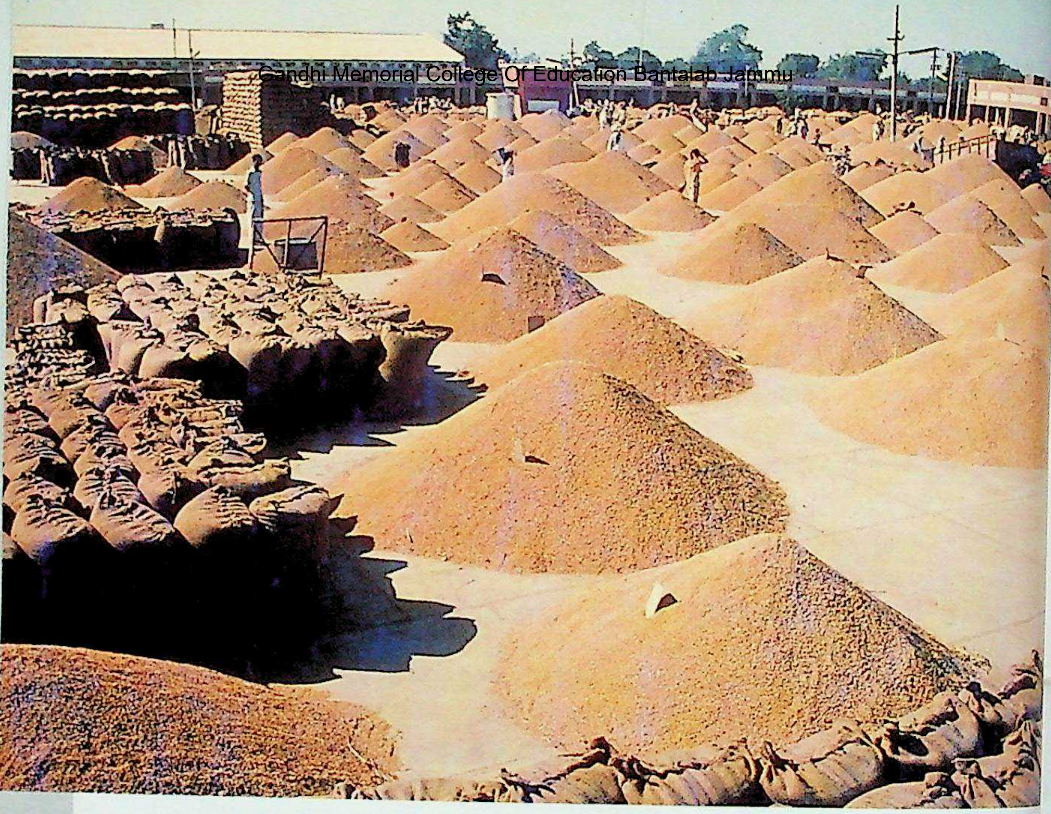
But by the time the next budget was presented in early 1992, the economy was on the mend. The inflation rate was coming down below 12 per cent and external reserves were at a much more respectable $ 4.4 billion. The budget proposed to carry further the attempt to cut deficit financing and, most importantly, partially floated the Indian rupee by introducing a composite exchange rate — 60 per cent of external transactions were to be carried out at the market-determined rate, 40 per cent at the official rate. A new trade policy reduced physical controls even further.

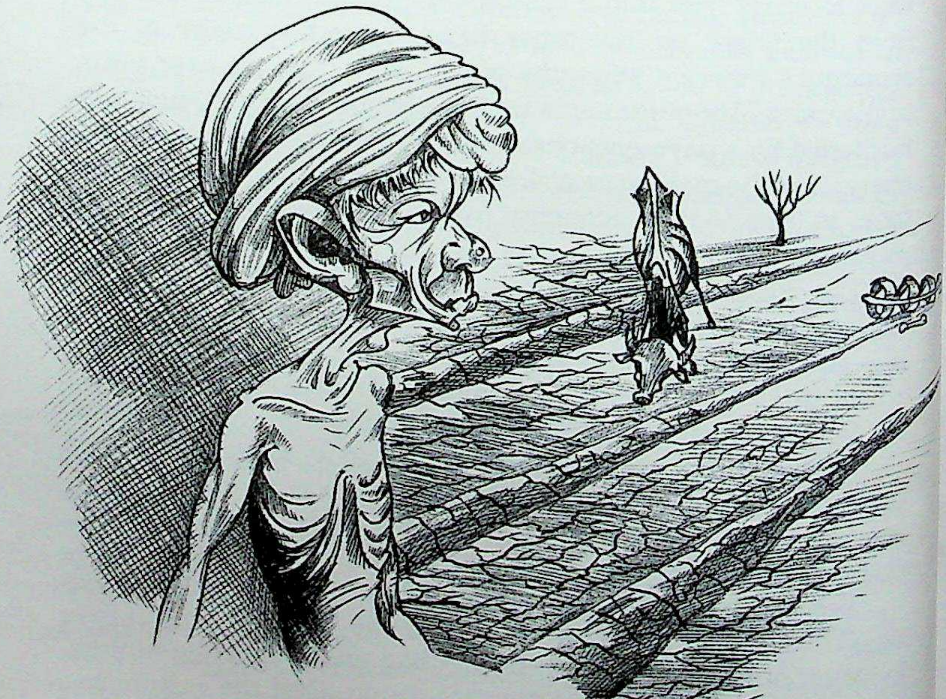
The next milestone was the budget presented in early 1993 and it heralded a new era by making the Indian rupee fully convertible in the current account. Residual import licensing restrictions remained but there was no question that the Indian economy had travelled a long way in opening up to the rest of the world. Foreign exchange markets reacted positively to the government's decision with an upward pressure on the rupee, which could be held at earlier levels only with the Indian central bank buying dollars and thus pushing up reserves to over $ 6 billion. The budget was able to record considerable progress in reducing deficit financing, with the fiscal deficit going down to 5.6 per cent of GDP from the historical high of 8.4 per cent. On the external front, successive budgets brought down customs duties first to a maximum of 110 per cent and then to 85 per cent.

The partial success of the Indian economy in the eighties, the crisis at the turn of the decade and the initial signs of a quick turnaround underline both its strengths and weaknesses. The positive aspects of the eighties hide the endemic maladies that were to erupt later into a full-blown crisis. The quick recovery from the crisis, on the other hand, underline many of the economy's inherent strengths which were built up over years of planning. About the same time the Soviet economy, similarly burdened by a payments crisis and the ill effects of ignoring the energies of the marketplace altogether, went under. A sectorwise look at the Indian economy will illustrate its pluses and minuses.

The contrasts characterising the Indian economy are perhaps most dramatically highlighted by its food situation. Today it is self-sufficient in grains, exporting half a million tonnes of wheat in 1990 and being in a position to do so again in 1993. In fact, after every year of good rains the government's warehouses are bursting with grain. But acute malnutrition and undernourishment still rule in pockets, especially where tribals live in isolated backwardness. Stories of distress — the sale of children keep cropping up in newspapers.

What is more, the state's grain stocks, its biggest bulwark against famine if the rains fail in any one year, are in part the creation of its poverty. If everyone had enough money to buy all the grain they need all the year round, then the surplus in





good years would be much lower. The buffer stocks are created by government purchases at harvesting time to ensure that grain prices do not crash and destroy farm economics. It is not just the commercial farmers who produce for the market, even the marginal ones sell some of their produce at harvest time to repay the loans they had taken to raise the crop. And in the lean months the latter buy their grain from the market.

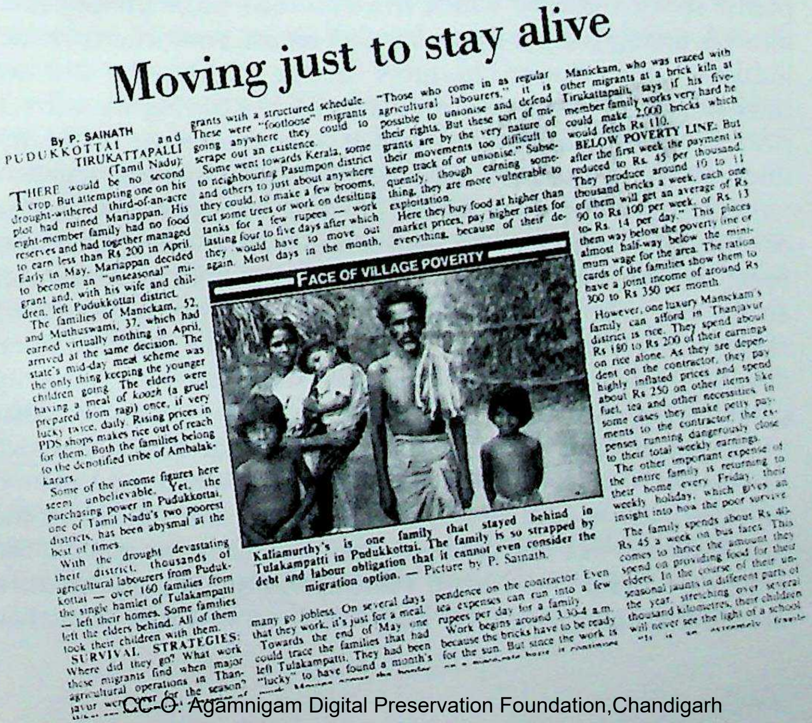
The agricultural labourer works for a wage of grain and money right round the year. The dry months before the rains, when there is little work for extra farm hands (tilling for the new sowing can only start after the first showers) are the toughest for him. This is when the government starts food-for-work programmes to keep rural hunger at bay, the wages being partly in grain which comes from the state's food stocks. The more the rains fail, the greater the food shortage and rural distress and, correspondingly, the larger the length of rural roads built and the greater the depletion of the state's food stocks.

From time immemorial, India has prospered when the rain gods have smiled (not too much though, as that would result in floods) and has been ravaged by starvation in drought years. In many ways, the drought year of 1987 proved to be a turning point. First, the loss in food output was far less than the failure of the rains, indicating that the spread of irrigation has greatly insulated the economy from the vagaries of the weather. But a far more deep-rooted change was also taking place. Because of a more and more elaborate food distribution programme to mitigate distress, the gap between per capita food availability in a good year and bad year was increasingly narrowed. Thus in a good agricultural year when the government would wind down its relief programmes, the poor would buy their food from the market with the little money they did make from the good harvest. And in a bad year when the open market price of food would be quite beyond the reach of the poor, they would not be all that badly off, thanks to the food-for-work programmes.

Thus India is self-sufficient in food and can balance out the good and bad years only because acute rural poverty restricts demand even in times of so-called plenty. Urban poverty is more visible to the visitor who is jolted by the city slums with all their revolting squalor. But urban poverty is actually less acute than rural poverty. In the cities, almost everybody has some access to subsidized grain through the state distribution system. The medical care provided by the state-run town hospitals is appallingly inadequate but better than the condition in the countryside where modern health care for the poor is non-existent. In eastern India, the poorer part of the country, there is an influx of rural poor to the towns during drought years because the poor know that there they can at least beg for alms on the streets.

The single biggest achievement of independent India is the ability to banish famine, that is widespread starvation, over a period of rapid population growth. And one of its greatest failures is the inability to banish acute malnutrition among the bottom third of the population. This has very interestingly been linked to the nature of Indian polity which is characterised by a functioning democracy and press—both alive and kicking but terribly flawed. The system does not tolerate widespread starvation or a sharp fall in living standards but allows widespread malnutrition to continue. The Indian press is credited with a role in this. It has maintained a strict vigil over famine, thus keeping it at bay, but it has lacked the zeal to campaign against continued malnutrition and poverty.

This victory over famine, made possible by the green revolution, is also shot through with contradiction. It commercialised agriculture to produce the extra grain needed by the burgeoning population but it created a system of state subsidies that is partially responsible for the crisis of 1990-91. After the historic drought and Bihar famine of 1966, the government began to put in place the delivery system that created the green revolution. This consisted of the wonder high-yielding seeds, crop loans from banks, power or diesel oil and assured supply of fertilisers–all made available in the irrigated areas of the northwest. The bedrock of this whole package of inputs was their stabilised prices, linked to a government crop support price that ensured an adequate return to the farmer. Over the years the government, to keep its food



Moving just to stay alive

By P. SAINATH
PUDUKKOTTAI and TIRUKATTAPALLI (Tamil Nadu):

THERE would be no second crop. But attempting one on his drought-withered third-of-an-acre plot had ruined Manappan. His eight-member family had no food reserves and had together managed to earn less than Rs 200 in April. Early in May, Manappan decided to become an "unseasonal" migrant and, with his wife and children, left Pudukkottai district.

The families of Manickam, 52, and Muthuswami, 37, which had earned virtually nothing in April, arrived at the same decision. The state's mid-day meal scheme was the only thing keeping the younger children going. The elders were having a meal of *koozh* (a gruel prepared from ragi) once, if very lucky twice, daily. Rising prices in PDS shops makes rice out of reach for them. Both the families belong to the denotified tribe of Ambalakkarars.

Some of the income figures here seem unbelievable. Yet, the purchasing power in Pudukkottai, one of Tamil Nadu's two poorest districts, has been abysmal at the best of times.

With the drought devastating their district, thousands of agricultural labourers from Pudukkottai — over 160 families from the single hamlet of Tulakampatti — left their homes. Some families left the elders behind. All of them took their children with them.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES: Where did they go? What work these migrants find when major agricultural operations in Thanjavur were over for the season?

grants with a structured schedule. These were "footloose" migrants going anywhere they could to scrape out an existence.

Some went towards Kerala, some to neighbouring Pasumpon district and others to just about anywhere they could, to make a few brooms, cut some trees or work on desilting tanks for a few rupees — work lasting four to five days after which they would have to move out again. Most days in the month, many go jobless. On several days that they work, it's just for a meal.

Towards the end of May one could trace the families that had left Tulakampatti. They had been "lucky" to have found a month's

"Those who come in as regular agricultural labourers," it is possible to unionise and defend their rights. But these sort of migrants are by the very nature of their movements too difficult to keep track of or unionise." Subsequently, though earning something, they are more vulnerable to exploitation.

Here they buy food at higher than market prices, pay higher rates for everything, because of their dependence on the contractor. Even tea expenses can run into a few rupees per day for a family.

Work begins around 3.30-4 a.m. because the bricks have to be ready for the sun. But since the work is

Manickam, who was traced with other migrants at a brick kiln at Tirukattapalli, says if his five-member family works very hard he could make 2,000 bricks which would fetch Rs 110.

BELOW POVERTY LINE: But after the first week the payment is reduced to Rs. 45 per thousand. They produce around 10 to 11 thousand bricks a week, each one of them will get an average of Rs 90 to Rs 100 per week, or Rs. 13 to Rs. 14 per day." This places them way below the poverty line or almost half-way below the minimum wage for the area. The ration cards of the families show them to have a joint income of around Rs 300 to Rs 350 per month.

However, one luxury Manickam's family can afford in Thanjavur district is rice. They spend about Rs 180 to Rs 200 of their earnings on rice alone. As they are dependent on the contractor, they pay highly inflated prices and spend about Rs 250 on other items like fuel, tea and other necessities. In some cases they make petty payments to the contractor, the expenses running dangerously close to their total weekly earnings.

The other important expense of the entire family is returning to their home every Friday, their weekly holiday, which gives an insight into how the poor survive.

The family spends about Rs 40-Rs 45 a week on bus fares. This comes to thrice the amount they spend on providing food for their elders. In the course of their unseasonal jaunts in different parts of the year, stretching over several thousand kilometres, their children will never see the light of a school.

FACE OF VILLAGE POVERTY

Kaliamurthy's is one family that stayed behind in Tulakampatti in Pudukkottai. The family is so strapped by debt and labour obligation that it cannot even consider the migration option. — Picture by P. Sainath.

procurement bill low (the food that would be distributed through the rationing system), kept the procurement price low and ensured an adequate return to the farmer by subsidizing the inputs. Thus, by the end of the eighties, indirectly, for fertilisers, diesel oil, power and irrigation water.

The result ? On the plus side is a slowly spreading green revolution that after the northwestern states of Punjab and Haryana has spread to western Uttar Pradesh, upper Rajasthan and is now nudging eastern Uttar Pradesh. On the minus side is state-subsidized commercial agriculture, producing a new rural elite which cannot be ignored by any political party. The net result: an agricultural subsidy bill stuck in the government's throat and holding it to ransom, just as the European and Japanese farmers are holding their respective political systems hostage.

The agricultural subsidy bill partly, though not entirely, contributed to the burgeoning government deficits in the late eighties. These created the inflationary pressures which made Indian goods non-competitive in the rest of the world, leading to a trade deficit. From there to the payments crisis was but a short step. The government deficit was also contributed to by the public sector industry which had absorbed huge investments but was unable to offer even a modest return. And when private industry was allowed to grow in the eighties, it did so unhealthily, in a protected environment, not paying the correct price for the hard currency that it was absorbing. Naturally imports grew faster and contributed to the payments crisis.

Our brief overview of the Indian economy has so far concentrated mostly on the farm sector as rural and agricultural India is the dominant reality. Also the initial neglect of agriculture in Indian planning and the inability to carry out land reforms are considered as major reasons for the continued poverty and poor growth. Commercial agriculture can only spread when the farmer is able to use the new inputs. For that he needs at least security of tenancy if not permanence of ownership. Who will lend to a sharecropper who can be ousted the next season and which rootless cultivator will have the application to eke out the bad years as well as the good ? The green revolution has spread eastward only haltingly because, first, initial state subsidies, particularly in irrigation, that had been extended to the northwest have never been matched, and second, land reforms have mostly eluded the east so far. The great exception is tenancy reforms in the state of West Bengal.

Not only were post-Independence efforts at spreading land reforms mostly still-born, the five-year plans did not create a positive role for agriculture. The plans were premised on extracting a surplus from agriculture and investing it in industry, particularly the machine-building or capital goods industry. This, it was believed, would produce the quickest growth and remove poverty the fastest. But the state was unable to impose the austerity implicit in the initial years of such a process. As a result, there were periodic foreign exchange and food shortages, making the planning a stop-go exercise.

Indian planning was also premised on the need to attain "self-sufficiency"and there was a consequent export pessimism. The lack of attention to exports perpetuated the foreign exchange shortages and reinforced the need for import controls, resulting in extensive domestic protection. India's experience of British colonial rule, during which the Indian economy was subordinated to the British economy and made to yield a surplus through unequal international trade relations, created the intense post-Independence desire for self-sufficiency. It was perceived as the greatest bulwark against any possible loss of political sovereignty.

This philosophy of development was quite in vogue during the fifties when it was first adopted. Indian planning was then keenly watched by development economists internationally as a major experiment that incorporated many new ideas germinating all over the world. The Indian mind was then anything but closed, seeking to garner fresh wisdom that sought to build a new world after the wars and the end of colonialism. What went wrong was the inability to implement any policy consistently and adapt to new situations. With time, an adventurous experiment was turned into a dogma that retained the form and forgot the substance.

Over the years, Indian industry became marked by highly diversified growth on the one hand and lack of international competition on the other. The public sector, which absorbed huge investments, made possible the diversified growth and attainment of self-sufficiency but also became a handmaiden of the new pressure groups that dominated Indian polity. It became a source of power and pelf for the politician and the bureaucrat and its existence was jealously guarded by its blue and white collar workers who outperformed unorganized workers in their real income growth.

Large private industry, which was kept out of many key areas and protected from international competition, learned to survive by distorting the system. Industrial licensing, devised to channel investment into productive lines, became a means for established business houses to keep out competition and the anti-monopoly law, with its ceiling on company size (big was perceived as predatory), actually resulted in stultifying growth.

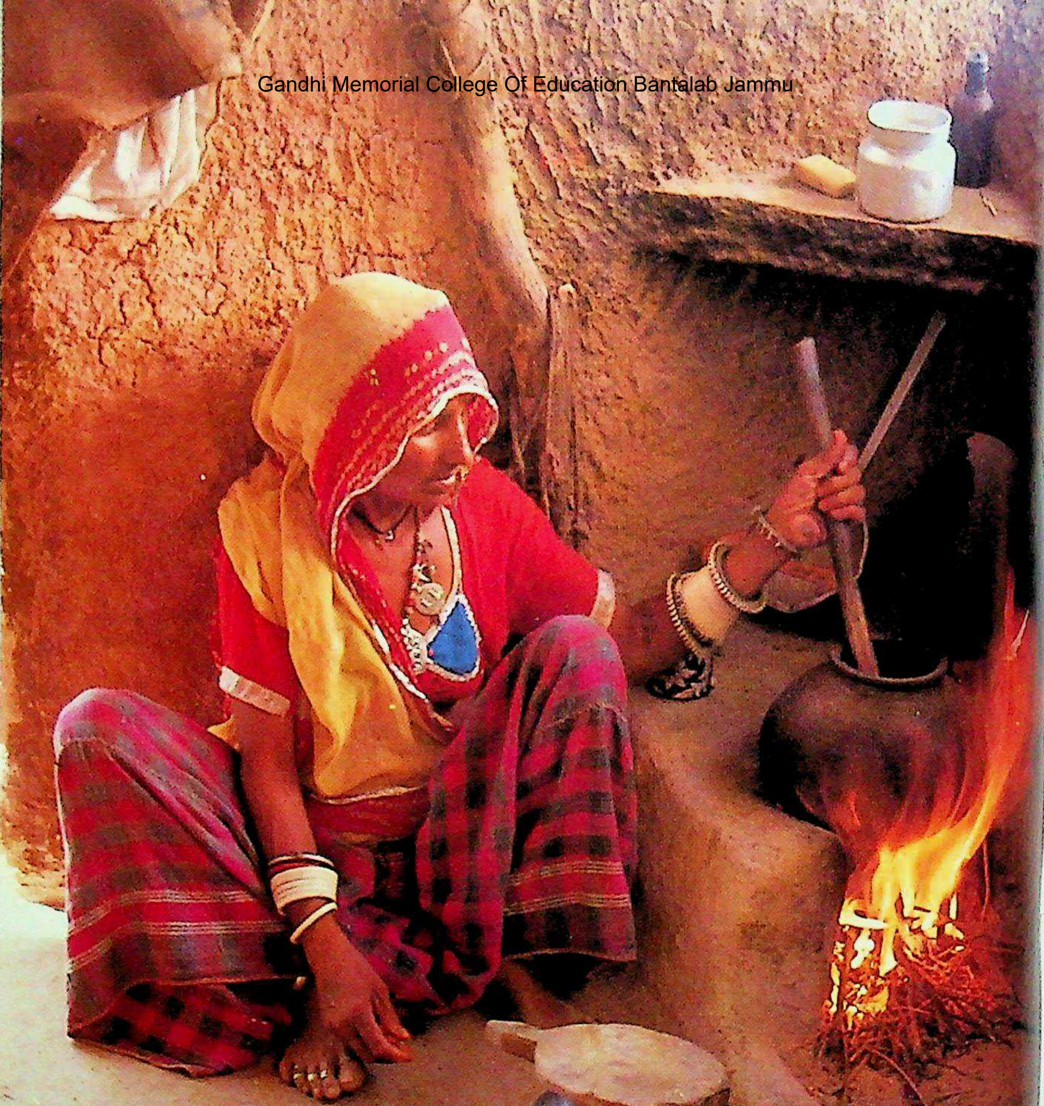
The first winds of change began to blow in the eighties during the governments of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi through the loosening up of technology imports and a slow relaxation of official policy towards the manufacture of consumer goods. Two watersheds were the introduction of colour TV, assembled from imported kits, in 1982 and the small car Maruti (in collaboration with Suzuki) in 1984. The decade was also marked by the introduction of the concept of minimum economic size to ensure that new large projects reaped the economies of scale that the latest international technology had to offer.

This was specially true in the fields of petrochemicals and gas-based fertilisers, the growth made possible by the sharp rise in oil and natural gas output in the early eighties. But the industrial licences for these projects were secured through political lobbying and, what was worse, technology, plant and machinery were imported for them at grossly over-valued exchange rate. The products were then sold in the protected domestic market at a hefty profit, as in the case of petrochemicals, or on a cost-plus basis, as in the case of government-regulated fertilisers.

The mega projects and the halting, distorted liberalization of the eighties also produced a new equity cult in India. The average middle class householder was given his first opportunity to hold shares, thus achieving a Thatcherite holy grail. Right through the eighties, the Indian capital market grew rapidly, ending in an exponential growth in amounts raised from the capital market towards the end of the decade. And when

clik-claks
NESCAFE
Custard Powder
Campa
Johnson's buds

Above : Factory line-up of scooters
Below : Departmental store.



A Rajasthani village woman in her kitchen.

private industry began to be slowly freed of its shackles in 1991, the stock markets boomed. The Indian situation was something like that in the US during the Reagan years, with companies finding it more profitable to trade in securities than manufacture goods.

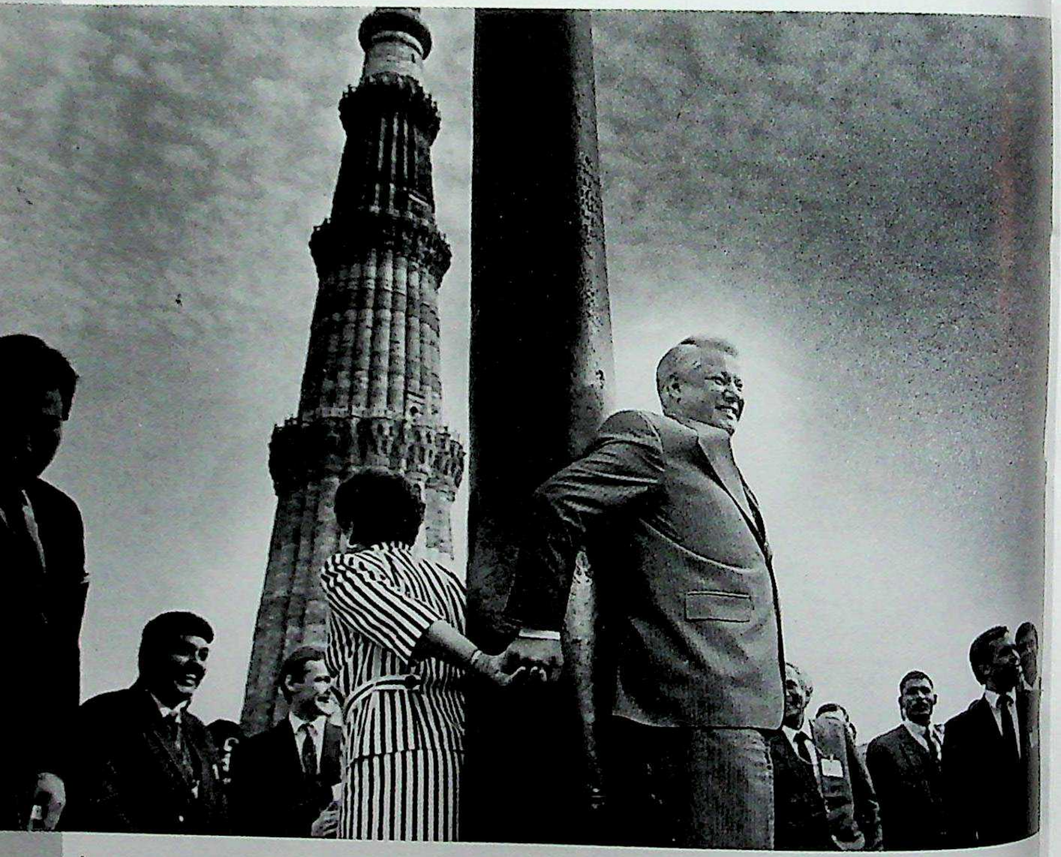
The boom not only ended in 1992 but the end was brought about by the discovery of a huge financial scandal in which upwards of Rupees 5,000 crore ($ 1.6 billion) have been lost by several foreign banks, the more aggressive Indian merchant banks and some public sector financial companies. Subsequent investigations found that institutions and systems incapable of handling volumes generated by a frenzied boom were left unpoliced to do pretty much as they pleased. Rampant insider trading, price rigging and highly leveraged trading were the order of the day. The fledgling Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) achieved control over the capital market only around the time the scandal came to light.

After two years of reforms the Indian economy resembled an economy in the earlier stages of capitalism, lacking a transparent regulatory system to promote competition and without much protection for either the consumer or the environment. It had lost some of its shackles of the past without gaining the regulatory mechanism which could alone promote sustainable growth. Institutions and laws to protect the environment and the consumer and to regulate the financial markets were still very young and lacking in clout.

India's break with the past came under the threat of bankruptcy, something that its essentially conservative Asian ethos abhorred. That is why a minority government was able to pull through changes which earlier ones with massive majorities did not dare. And the initial success of the reforms was made possible by two inherent strengths: the deep-rooted entrepreneurial traditions that took naturally to the freeing of market forces and the socialist construction of the planning era that had given the economy depth.

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

BHABANI SEN GUPTA

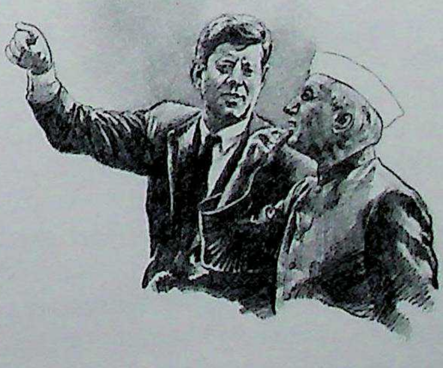


Russian President Boris Yeltsin with Naina Yeltsin trying their luck at the Iron Pillar at Qutab Minar, New Delhi.

BHABANI SEN GUPTA is Senior Research Professor, Centre for Policy Research and Visiting Professor in International Relations, Columbia University, New York City. He is author of 16 books on international and domestic political issues and scores of scholarly papers published in India and abroad.

"A world is coming to an end and a new world is taking shape," wrote Jawaharlal Nehru in 1940 in a revised edition of his *Autobiography*. Even at the first stage of World War II, he had vague apprehensions that the Allied Powers would win but lose their colonial empires; India would finally shake off its two centuries of colonial shackles and win its legitimate place in the comity of sovereign nations. The Allies did win the war. Empire did deliver a huge quantity of nations. India did achieve its independence. But the new world was not born into a new peace but a new cold war. British India was partitioned into two mutually warring neighbours, the other being Pakistan. Decolonization meshed and mingled at once with the frigid struggle of two power blocs, each headed by a superpower, for the minds and resources of the newly independent nations. India did wake up at midnight when the world slumbered. But, as the ancient Chinese poet Li Tao Tai-po had moaned, "Dawn reddened in the wake of night, but the days of our lives return not/ The eye contains the far horizon, but the sound of spring lies deep in the heart."

Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the authors of the partition. He was the natural Prime Minister of Independent India and he was also its natural Foreign Minister. A student of the natural sciences, his first love turned out to be history and politics, the conjugal creators of diplomacy and foreign policy. Forty-five years after Independence and 28 years after Nehru's death, the doxology of the eternal First in political India remains pervasive. Despite the fact that the world in which India was reborn as an independent state and in which Nehru shone as the calligraphed pope of the virgin awakening of a host of new nations, has faded into history and another world is strenuously emerging from the coiled womb of the



corpse of the Cold War, wondering whether history itself has ended or is just about to begin, Indian foreign policy cannot be separated from the iconography of its first Prime Minister. The myths of that foreign policy cast a smile on India's fuzzy groping for a niche in the confused post - Cold War world.

Continuity in the midst of change is the hallmark of the foreign policy of all large nations which wish to leave their footprints on the rustling leaves of history. Thomas A. Bailey in his diplomatic history of the American people, began his classical study of US diplomacy from the founding of the republic to the end of the Second World War with a quotable paragraph: "The plain truth is that the United States has always had fundamental foreign policies and objectives, whether far-sighted or short-sighted, successful or unsuccessful. A half-dozen or so of them have persisted for well over a century. In some cases these objectives or policies, notably "no entangling alliances," were pursued with a blind devotion long after the reasons for their existence had passed, and when their continued existence did positive harm. Few, if any, of the great powers can point to such a large body of traditional policy adhered to so tenaciously over so many decades."

Bailey identified six "fundamental policies" the United States tried to uphold in its interactions with the nations of the 18th and 19th centuries. Among them, isolation, the Monroe doctrine, Pan-Americanism, the Open Door and freedom of the seas are verities of US foreign policy and diplomacy even to this day, though indeed some of the phrases have been translated into the language of the 20th century and will be pursued even in the 21st. Pax Americana is one of the lighthouses that tantalize strong segments of the US foreign policy community, the largest in the world. The Monroe doctrine remains an eternal verity of Washington's world view. Open Door is now known as Free Trade, while freedom of the seas has turned into control of the world's strategic sealanes, both to defend free trade and America's global stature and masculature.

India does not compare with the United States as a Power, but the two are not without certain similarities created by shots of history as well as by nature. Continuity of foreign policy objectives is only one of them even though India's international experience has not spanned even half a century. However, the emptiness created by the departure of the Raj was filled up to an extent by adopting the essentials of the strategic outlook of the Viceroys of British India, especially Lord Curzon, with regard to the geography of India's location. Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Afghanistan and the Indian Ocean were unannexed portions of the British imperial domain. These territories are now integrated in Indian foreign policy strategic thinking, even though the tide of history has changed the identity of these areas and spaces of land and water. India was a British colony much longer than was America; both have an anti-imperialist bias. For the United States, the bias survived as long as the first decade of the 20th century when it became an imperialist power itself, and vanished completely after World War II when, in Indian perception, it entered the unknown and uncharted terrain of Asia to defend the residual interests of Europe's colonial powers — the French in Indo-China, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Portuguese in Goa. The Truman Doctrine sealed the transfer of Britain's imperial burden in Greece, Turkey and the Arab world to the United States; in no time to these burdens were added the protection of Western interests in Iran and the Persian Gulf. Even in the post-Cold War, early stages of the uneasy impalement of the rivalries of five decades with the USSR and world communism, a retrenchment of America's "global" commitments has triggered a searing debate in the United States.

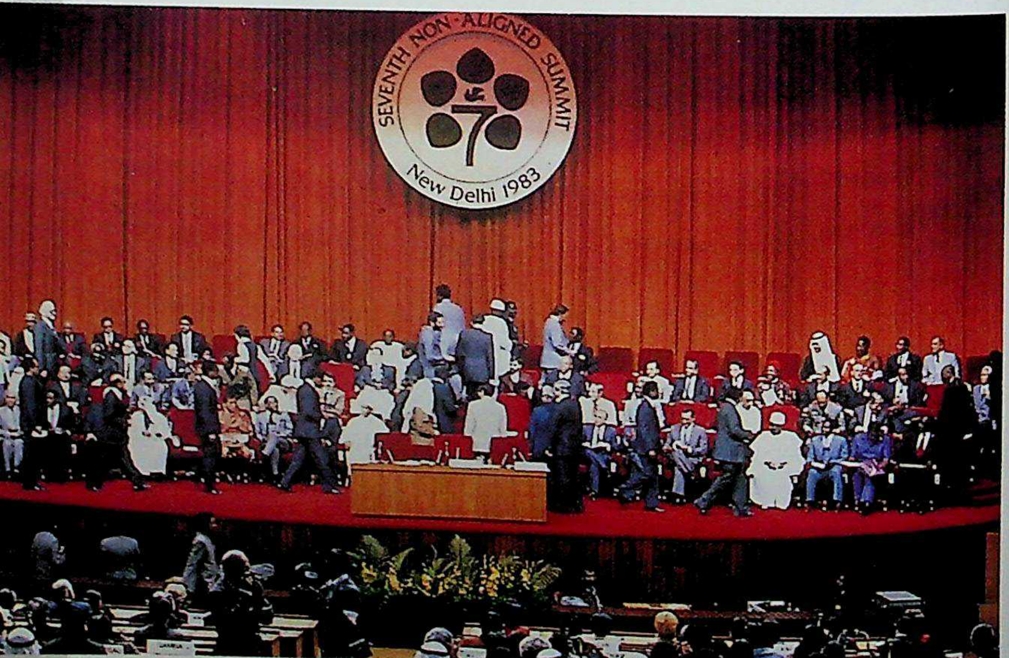
For India and many other nations in the developing world, an age sighed when the Cold War came to an end. The verities and certainties, the opportunities to use weakness as a weapon of strength, of preaching morality to the Powers without practising it in the smaller orbits of their own foreign policies, the privilege of non-implementation of the silken ethical postulates of foreign policy vanished with the Cold War. The Cold War had bought India a large bouquet of rewards. The largest democracy in the world could cast an injured frown with some effect on Washington's attempts to trim its diplomatic and foreign policy aspirations and make it impossible for Uncle Sam to punish it for its close friendship with the USSR. Even when Dulles condemned Non-Alignment as sin, and not a single President clicked with Nehru, including John F. Kennedy, who found him vague and woolly, India received the largest share of US foreign aid in the 50s, the largest supplies of PL-480 foodgrains till the late 60s, planeloads of weapons in 1963 after the border war with China, and the largest share of the World Bank and IMF "soft window" low-interest-rate long-term loans till the 80s. Nixon was livid with anger when Indira Gandhi, who became Prime Minister in January 1966, intervened with a military force in the Bangladesh war on behalf of the Bengali nationalist struggle against Pakistan and crushed the Pakistani army. The Enterprise, a nuclear weapon-carrying battleship, steamed into the Bay of Bengal in what Indians perceived as a threatening mood. But, drawing a lesson from the unilateral withdrawal of Chinese troops from conquered Indian territory in December 1962, Mrs Gandhi repeated the feat in Bangladesh ten years later, disarming the Nixon administration which glowered in impotent anger at the security-related treaty of peace and friendship India had signed with Moscow in August 1971, and at the political-strategic help India received from its

'Jawans' of the Indian Army guarding borders.

ally in conducting the Bangladesh intervention. The American media, on the other hand, rewarded India,recognizing it for the first time as the "primary power" in South Asia backed by the superpower, USSR. From this appreciation India quickly derived its role and goal as the leading regional power in South Asia. Once this role was adopted as a major foreign policy objective, there was no escape from giving it the necessary underpinning of military strength and once military prowess was acquired, it could hardly not be used as an instrument of regional foreign policy, and, once it was used, India came to be perceived as the hegemon of South Asia, with its own security doctrine that implied, without declaring it with the clarity of the Monroe doctrine, that its primary role in South Asia must not be trespassed by any regional or extra-regional power. The United States, then, made no mean a contribution towards India's emergence as the regional power in South Asia during the Cold War years, even though there were sharp differences between the two on scores of multilateral global issues.

Nehru's foreign policy aspirations, however, were different. His vision of India was that of an ancient civilization coming back to life in the world of the 20th century to play a constructive role at the centre of global affairs, not on its peripheries. Nehru wanted to build India into a modern industrial power. His socialism was an Indian version of Fabian socialism; he was a firm and committed believer in democracy and freedom of the individual. While he planned a large state sector of the economy with heavy industrial plants producing steel, machinery, tractors, cement and fertilizers, he kept the entire agricultural sector in the private ownership of propertied peasants, and gave private enterprise a significant role in the industrial economy under generous state protection. He spoke about socialism but laid foundations of a capitalist economy though his daughter, Indira Gandhi, delayed the inauguration of capitalism by 20 years by bringing much of the economy under rigid bureaucratic-political control.

The base was India's stature as the largest power in the developing world with an enlightened national leadership, a strong parliamentary democratic system planted on the soft soil of underdevelopment, the non-partisan world view of its Prime Minister, its moderate anti-imperialism and its firm distance from the ideology of communism as instruments of statecraft and nation-building. As a rival and adversary of the United States and its Western allies, the USSR had nothing to show in its own bloc but a string of satellite communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and a gigantic China which from the beginning of its Maoist regime was more a source of concern than reassurance. India became Moscow's biggest and most precious international asset from the year 1955 when Khrushchev and Bulganin landed in India to a tumultuous welcome of millions of human beings through the tortuous decades of the Cold War including the decade-plus period of Soviet interventions in the developing world as a true competitor of the US — in Vietnam and Nicaragua, in Angola and Ethiopia, in the Middle East and finally, in Afghanistan. The Soviets did everything within their limited resources to build India's industrial and military power base and massage its assertive ego. In return, India's moral voice was voluntarily muted when Soviet forces invaded Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan. When the Cold War came to an end, India was getting 70 per cent of its defence supplies from the USSR and exporting to that vast country 84



A session in progress, of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at Vigyan Bhavan,1983.

per cent of the products of its capital and consumer goods industries. If the rupee-rouble ratio worked against India's interests, it also gave India the great advantage of paying for imports from the USSR, including defence equipment, petroleum, and its products and for Soviet participation in the construction of steel and power plants and big hydroelectric projects in rupees, thus saving the very limited amount of hard currencies and protecting a high-cost low-technology economy from fearful international competition.

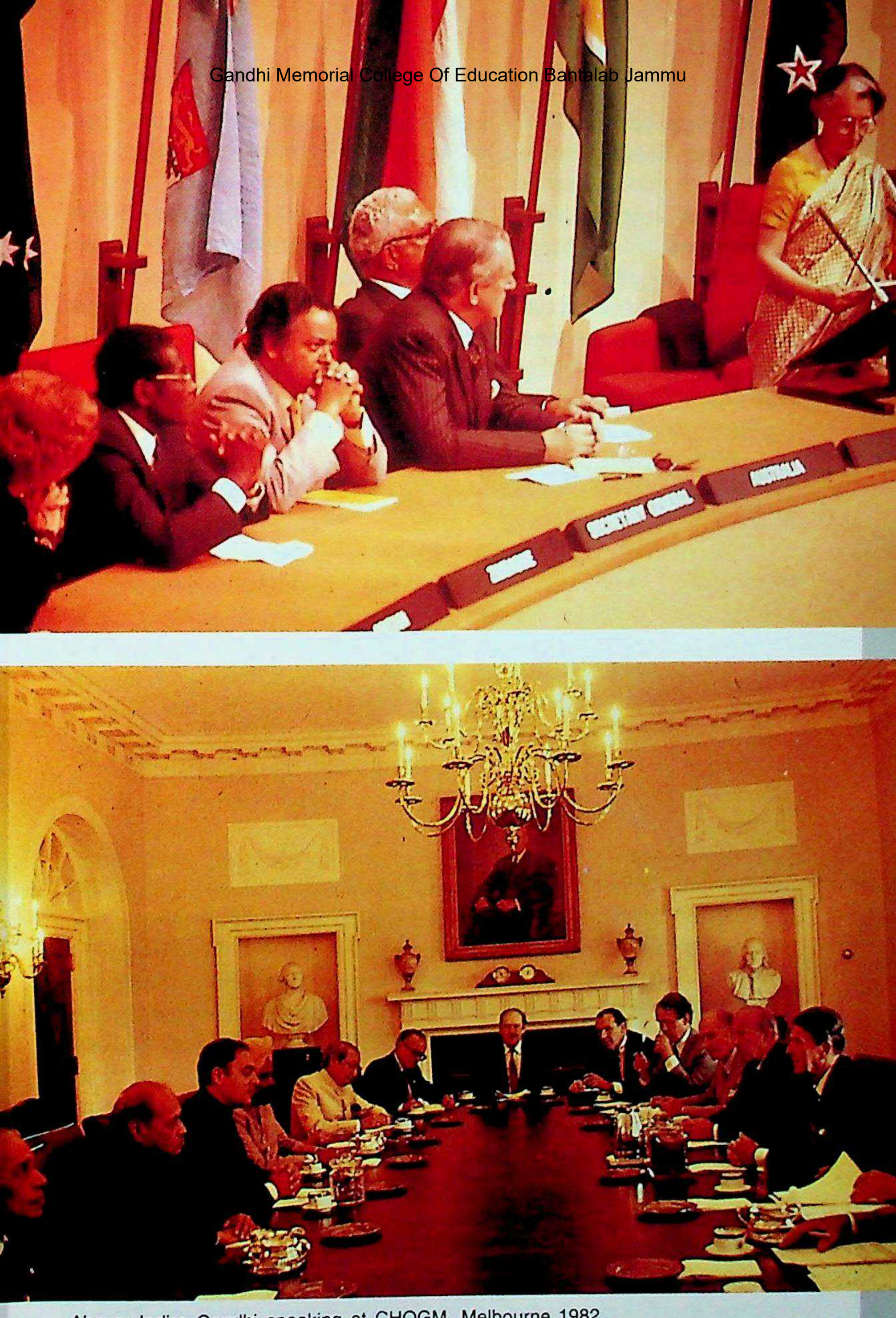
Eyes up, Nehru crafted the concept of Non-Alignment, together with other stalwarts of the non-partisan nations during the Cold War, to gain three specific foreign policy objectives. First, access to the centre of international politics with the effort to put together a group of nations that would not join either bloc, but would remain on friendly terms with both and try to act as a buffer between them in their eyeball-to-eyeball global confrontation. Secondly, to defend the independence of the non-partisan nations on which both the bloc leaders were ready to encroach. Thirdly, to get inputs of development from both blocs, especially their leaders, without retrenching the non-partisans' sovereignty. Together with the People's Republic of China, Nehru also composed a symphony of principles to govern international relations: the milk-white five principles of peaceful co-existence or Panchsheel: equality of nations, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-aggression and peaceful resolution of disputes and differences.

That both Non-Alignment and Panchsheel were welcomed by the Soviets and denounced by the United States reflected what Raymond Aron called the "tragic sense of history". The Soviets claimed to have found their "natural allies" in the community of Non-Aligned nations. The phrase "natural allies", however, had been coined by the renowned American commentator, Walter Lippman, when he castigated Truman for venturing out in the Near East and further south in Asia neglecting America's "natural allies" in Western Europe. Neither Non-Alignment nor Panchsheel has, however, survived the joltings and jarrings of the chariot of history. The Five Principles died on the India-China border during the war of 1962. Ten years later, they were ironically incorporated in the joint US-Soviet summit communique defining, for the first time, the superpower relationship in an era of detente. They died again as *détente* faded out in the 80s to reappear after the end of the Cold War as the centerpiece of China's foreign policy and Chinese view of international relations in the new world disorder.

With the passing of Nehru, in 1964, heart-broken by India's defeat at the hands of the Chinese along the border in 1962, the eyes-up phase of India's foreign policy came to an end. The next eight years found India locked in two wars with Pakistan. In 1972, after the victory in the Bangladesh war, began the second phase of India's foreign policy under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. The era of Nehru sighed. Neither India nor Non-Alignment was needed to act as a hyphen between the superpowers.

In the decade of *détente*, Indira Gandhi engaged herself in a pursuit of power in order to make India's influence felt strongly in the region of South Asia. She had the clairvoyance to realise that *détente* at the centre of world politics would not mean *détente* in the peripheries, that the peripheries would shoot up in importance as battleground of two global super-powers for influence. In 1974 Mrs Gandhi exploded a "peaceful" nuclear device, and demonstrated to the world India's ability to make nuclear weapons. But in the traditional Indian style, she stopped short of making India a nuclear power, which China had become a decade before. India remained a non-nuclear power with nuclear capability. In India's armoury of struggle for power, 'non' has played

Mahatma Gandhi :
"Toothless, and dressed in his habitual 'Khaddar' he talked rapidly, in a low voice and at inordinate length, but his utterance was impressive".
—Lord Butler


SECRETARY GENERAL
AUSTRALIA

Above: Indira Gandhi speaking at CHOGM, Melbourne 1982.
Below : Rajiv Gandhi at the White House with President Reagan discussing a wide range of bilateral issues.

a strategic cultural role. It was with non-cooperation that Mahatma Gandhi had waged the struggle for independence; it was with non-violence that he overpowered the world's mightiest empire. After Independence, Nehru crafted the doctrine of Non-Alignment. Non, in Indian thinking, is not a negative concept; it is positive power draped in rejectional attire. India's non-nuclearism rejected the nuclear regime of the nuclear powers; hence the dogged refusal to sign the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT); it is also a rejection of the role the nuclear deterrent has been assigned to keep the universe poised stably on an ever-unstable, peace.

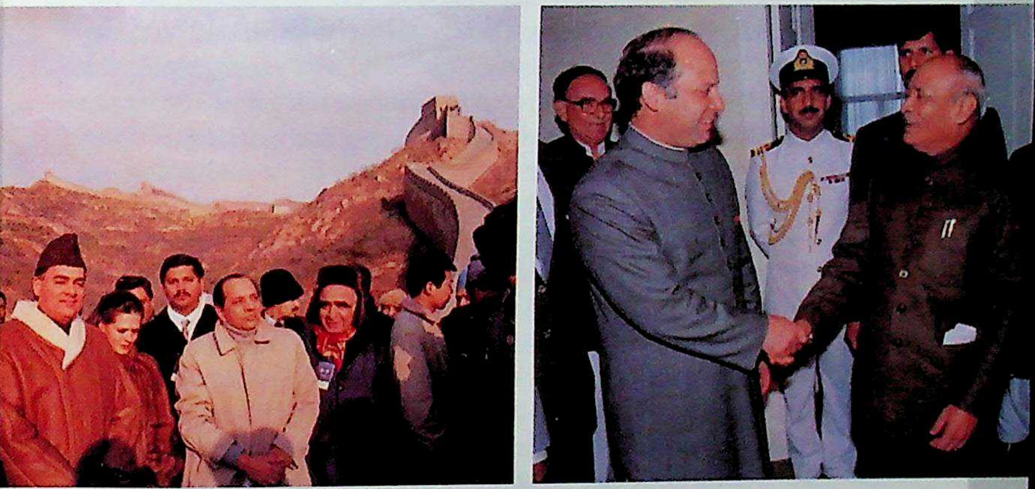
With nuclear power but without nuclear teeth, with military might conclusively proclaiming the country's superiority, Indira Gandhi launched India on a different track of power. The power of a hegemon in an important region of the world so that India could not be trivialized by the *détente*-seeking superpowers.

In her last term as Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi got her regime locked in vertical conflicts with several states. The conflict in Punjab rapidly turned into collective violence of segments of the Sikh community demanding a separate state of Khalistan. Hegemonism within India bred separatist movements in several regions in the following decade, and made Centre-State relationship, federalism and decentralization the hard currency of domestic politics, always in short supply. In the South Asian neighbourhood, India alienated most of its members.

Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded his mother as Prime Minister, pursued the same track of power and hegemony with renewed vigour, but with two sharp and timely differences. Firstly, he combined the acquisition of military power with the acquisition of modern technology to streamline India's industry, and moved gingerly towards opening up the protected economy to the outside world. Secondly, he tried to restore India's presence at the centre of world politics by striking up a rapport with the oddest couple: Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan. Earlier, by her non-opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Mrs Gandhi had wrested from President Leonid Brezhnev a 15-year arms supply agreement on the best possible terms, rupee payment and credit at 2 per cent interest repayable in 18 years. In 1983 she had also improved relations with the United

States by separating bilateral issues (where India and the US hardly differed) from multilateral issues (on which they almost always differed).

Rajiv Gandhi ruled for four years with repeated demonstrations of Indian military power, intervening in Sri Lanka's ethnic strife with a Peace-Keeping Force at the request of its beleaguered President, rescuing the President of Maldives from a threatened coup with a rapid deployment of force that took the world by surprise, holding military exercises close to the borders with Pakistan and China that created fresh confrontations with both neighbours, making it clear to Nepal and Bangladesh that India could make life difficult for them. The United States virtually left the smaller nations of South Asia alone, advising them to live in peace with India, and this indulgence was interpreted by Indian analysts as *de facto* American recognition of India's leading role in the region. Pakistan, as a frontline state in the US war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, was blessed with generous transfers of high-tech arms and weapons. However, its then military ruler, General Zia-ul-Haq, determined to avoid fighting on two fronts against powers both stronger than Pakistan, kept the peace with India with remarkably dexterous diplomacy.



Rajiv Gandhi on the Great Wall of China, 1988, and Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao with the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif. (Left to Right)

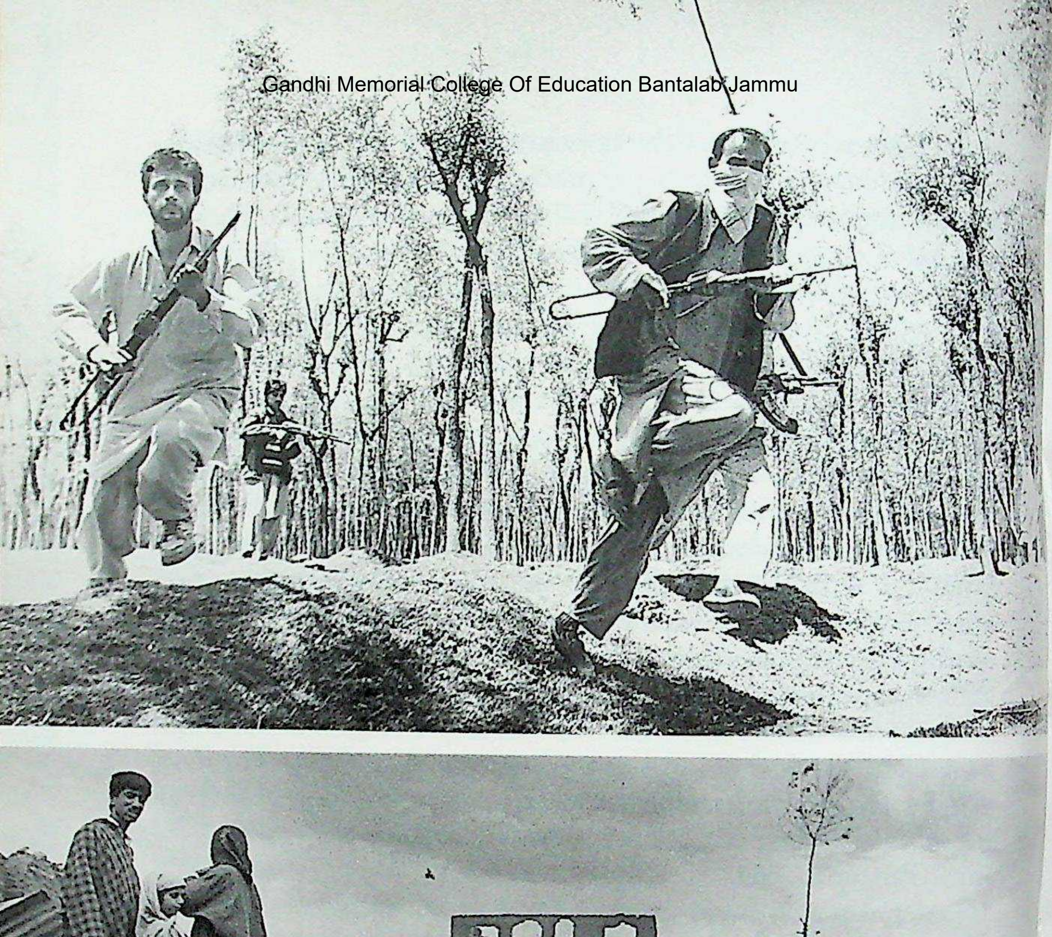
Rajiv Gandhi, however, also ploughed diplomatic furrows to improve relations with Pakistan and China. His meetings with the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ms Benazir Bhutto, produced the agreement under which the two countries committed not to strike each other's nuclear installations. It took the two neighbours three years to ratify the agreement and exchange lists of installations coming under it — the first instance of transparency in the knotted nuclear relations between Delhi and Islamabad. Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in November 1988 and his long conversation with Deng Xiaoping restored India-China relations to plausible perspectives of normalization. In the next four years, several exchanges of VIP visits, including a visit by the Prime Minister of China, Li Peng, to India in 1991 (the first after Zhou Enlai's in April 1960), the Indian concession that the border is negotiable, and measures to strengthen peace and tranquillity along the existing border, together with modestly increasing trade, scientific-technological and cultural relations, went some way to remove the heavy baggage of thirty years of mutual mistrust and animosity. In 1992 India's interactions with China is far less than its interactions with the United States and China's with India correspondingly far less than its interactions with Japan. But both large neighbours are once again looking at one another with smiling faces and less suspicious eyes.

Rajiv Gandhi lost the election of 1989 and his party sat in the opposition. But the coalition that took over the reins of government fell apart in 11 months, necessitating another election, in 1991. In between, a second minority government ruled for several months with the support of the Congress(I)of Rajiv Gandhi.

During these three years (1989-92), the global situation changed beyond recognition. India's foreign policy stuttered and fumbled, groping for an understanding of global change and anchors in an ocean of things unknown.

With the USSR gone and communism no longer a threat to the West, India faced a large vacuum in the post-Cold War planet. It was not easy for India and for the Third World in general to readjust foreign policy to the existential demands of what was often described as a unipolar planet in which the United States, though discarding the role of the world's policeman, would resist the emergence of rivals in any region, and would not hesitate to summon the strength of the P-5 of the UN Security Council and G-7 of the post-industrial nations to punish those who may be found unwilling to follow the unwritten rules of the so-called new world order. Released from the blinkers of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, the United States looked for the first time at the Third World with some clarity of vision and found a restless, seething universe of poor but awakening peoples demanding a larger share of the world's wealth, a more just and equitable world order. Democracy, human rights and the market became the catchwords of US and Western policy towards the developing nations. Nuclear non-proliferation, a global regime of control of ballistic missiles and other weapons of mass destruction and resolution of regional conflicts through the good offices of the United Nations topped the industrialized nations,agenda in dealing with the developing ones. At the same time, aid flows shrank. A global recession compelled the rich countries to be inward-looking. The gulf between North and South widened rather than narrowed, as the latter lost their traditional, though often not very effective, shield in the USSR.

As the world went through the painful transition from the Cold War to a still undefined new era of international politics, India passed from the single dominant party rule to a multi-party system which gave it three minority governments in succession and two elections between late 1989 and mid-1992. The second election took the life of Rajiv Gandhi at the hands of a woman member of a suicide squad of the Liberation Tigers of Tamils of Sri Lanka(of LTTE).To the unresolved insurgency of Khalistanis in Punjab were added two more internal armed rebellions. The four million Muslims of the Valley of Kashmir resorted to collective armed violence demanding independence for their state. In Assam, a' United Liberation Front' demanded a qualitative change in the state's relations with the Centre. Smaller armed protest movements sprouted in several other regions; the long tribal belt, home of 80 million wretched of the Indian earth, was in different moods of unrest. In short, demands for decentralization, federalism and grassroot democracy welled up from the womb of the Indian polity, putting the 150-million-strong national power elite in a state of siege.



Agony of Kashmir. Politics transforms the valley into a bloody battleground.

The remarkable thing about India is that it quickly collected its wits to navigate the dark clouds and storms of the global transition and to give foreign policy new directions in keeping with the central trends of global change. The 11-month-long National Front government of 1989-90 proceeded boldly to normalize relations with the small neighbours. It pulled out the IPKF from Sri Lanka a little ahead of the dateline agreed to, gave Nepal satisfaction on trade and transit and promised to resolve the "irritants" that inhibited relations with Bangladesh. But it came to a confrontation with Pakistan as the rulers in Islamabad intervened in the insurgency in Kashmir with arms and trained guerrilla fighters and sought to take the Kashmir issue back to the United Nations, trivializing the Simla agreement. In the explosive Gulf crisis, however, it tried to humour Saddam Hussein to get several hundred thousand Indian nationals working in Kuwait and Iraq. The next minority government led by an old-time socialist, Chandra Shekhar, who broke with the National Front and purchased a lease on power from the willing hands of Rajiv Gandhi, startled Indians by allowing American warplanes flying to the Gulf from the Far East to refuel in India. The third minority government, this time led by P.V. Narasimha Rao, a veteran of the Congress (I) party, gave the first priority to improving relations with the United States. With astonishing boldness quite uncharacteristic of his entire political career, he determined to liberate the Indian economy from the shackles of bureaucratic control, and adopted the policy of "going global", with a liberal regime of decontrol and deregulation, the opening of doors to foreign investment, and promise of gradual privatisation of certain areas that had long remained under public or state control. The left and liberal segments of the opposition howled in protest prices soared. But the people seemed to take the change in their stride. Few tears were shed outside the relatively small world of Nehruvian intellectuals and Marxist-Leninists for the departing era of Nehruvism. India finally embarked on the road to capitalist development.

During the cold war, India's virtues gained the attention of nations: its parliamentary democracy, non-confrontationist ideology, its enlightened leadership, its ability to mobilize nations in the developing world and speak on their behalf, its moderate anti-imperialism and its impressive ability to maintain friendly relations with both superpowers even while tilting heavily towards the USSR. In the post-Cold War world, India's deficits, some of them glaring, built its global image: the lack of exportable oil, non-monopoly of any strategic raw material, an overload of domestic conflict, confrontation with Pakistan, a near-empty exchequer, an explosive demographic situation, the largest mass of poor people anywhere on the earth. Economic strength has become the compelling first target of foreign policy; its conduct is taken over by the *banias* from the Brahmins. Indians have realized that they must improve the quality of their democracy but face tremendous internal obstacles, the hardest being the resistance of the power structure to meaningful social and political change that would transfer a much larger share of resources and power from Delhi to the states and then to democratic self-government institutions in the districts and villages.

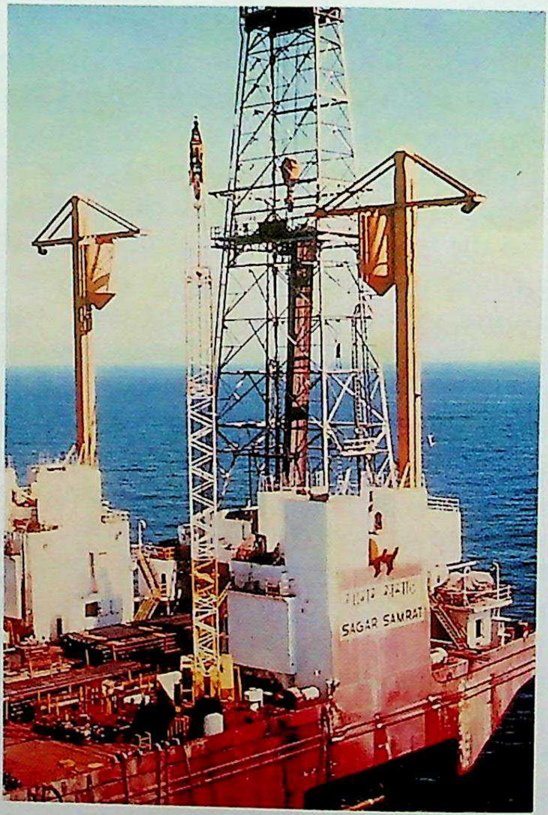
Even as India moves to adjust itself to the changed and still changing world, its basic foreign policy objectives remain largely the same. On the top of the agenda is sovereignty and territorial integrity which means that Kashmir has to be defended at any cost and military superiority over Pakistan maintained. Next in priority is a place under the warm sun of the non-Cold War planet worthy of India's size, civilization, human resources and maintains significant achievements in science and technology, industry and agriculture, the continuing art of democratic government despite many dark spots on it. India cannot surrender to an international regime that will keep it condemned to a non-power. The symbols of power— its nuclear capability, its missiles programme and its naval aspirations— are national icons which no government can disown even if these are for a while muted and subdued. India's demand for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council without veto power, if granted by the world community, will, in the perceptions of its elite groups, place the country on a par with Germany and Japan. Non-Alignment as an instrument of conducting international relations is dead, but the body will be kept floating if only to provide India and other countries with a world forum from which to address the major powers. More intrinsically, non-alignment has fortified a mind-set of independence and autonomy in foreign-policy decision-making that Indians will not allow to be trespassed.

Building a smooth, trouble-free, cooperative relationship with the United States is the first target of India's foreign policy in the early 90s. However, as the economy is globalized and derives its strength from the world economy of markets and moneys, as India succeeds to put its own house to a better order, its foreign policy will seek pastures of mutually beneficial, reciprocal and co-equal relations with other centres of power in the inevitably emerging multipolar world around the mid-90s. The conflicts and quarrels which India could sustain in the Cold War period, thanks largely to its pervasive friendship with the Soviet Union— the border war with China and the wars with Pakistan— are no longer viable options in the post-Cold War era. Opportunities to build a stable cooperative relationship with China along with a settlement of the border dispute will gain high foreign policy priority during this decade. With Pakistan also the search for norms of peaceful coexistence will be gaining momentum on both sides of the border. There shall be no more India-Pakistan wars. Along with building friendly relations with Japan and the EEC, Indian diplomacy will now steadily exert for the country's access into the mental horizon of nations of the Pacific rim, especially Korea and ASEAN. Iran and the Central Asian republics will similarly claim increasing attention in the north-west. Meanwhile, India will wait for Russia to emerge as a strong and stable leader of the world community with the hope that much of the relationship that existed for three decades between Delhi and the USSR will be re-established.

Not the stubborn and unimaginative Agamemnon but the guileful, flexible opportunity-grabber Odysseus will be the guiding star of India's (and most developing nations') foreign policy, seeking to take "at the floods" what Shakespeare called the "tide in the affairs of men."

INDIAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

R. RAMACHANDRAN



ONGC's Jack-up drilling rig, 'Sagar Samrat'.

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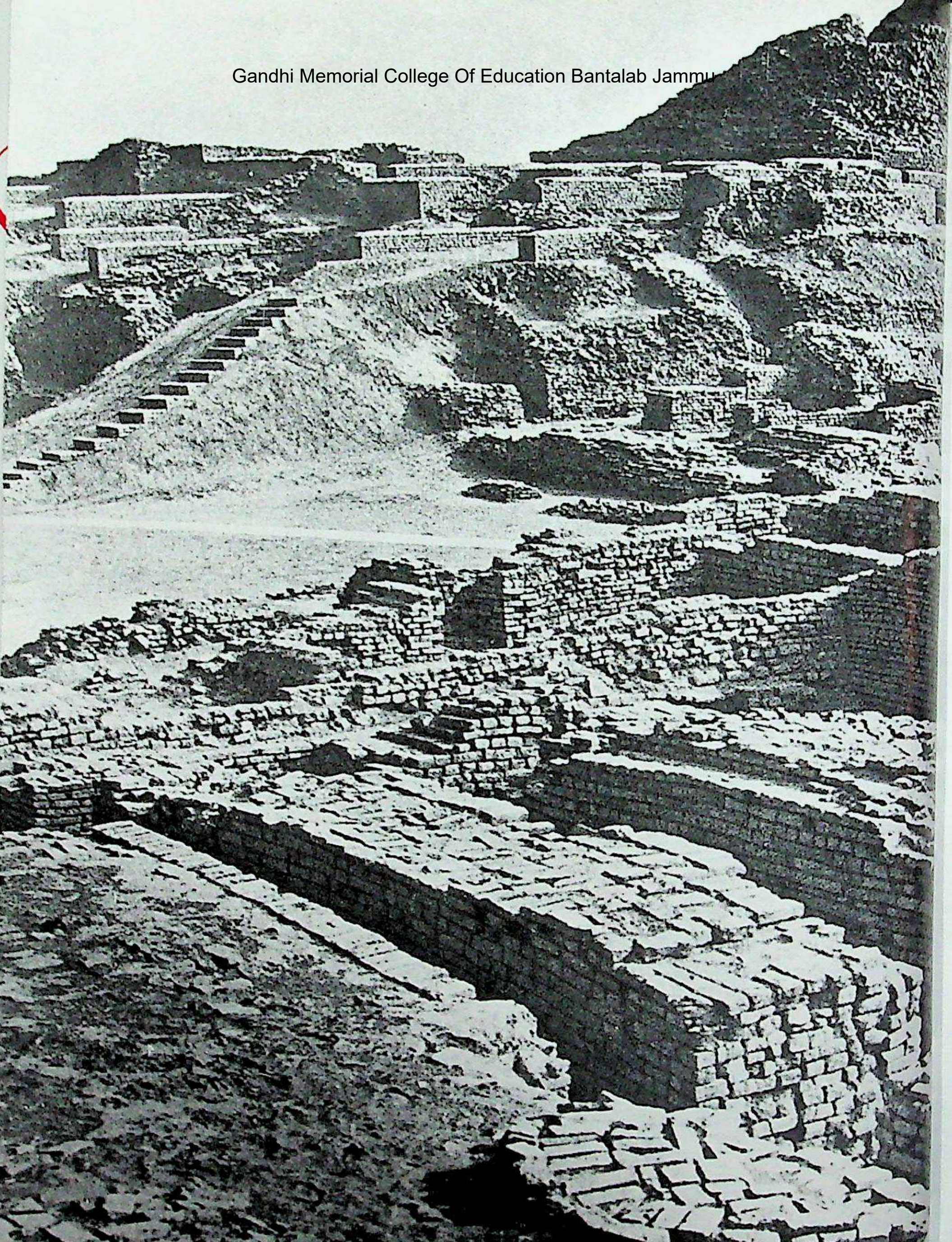
THE scientific tradition in India dates back to the ancient and medieval times. During this period unparalleled advances in the areas of mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy and medical sciences took place and this golden age can be said to have lasted till about the 12th century. It is, however, unfortunate that science languished in the subsequent few hundreds of years and developments in Europe and elsewhere had stolen the march over Indian achievements. While repression due to foreign rule and colonization was definitely a contributing factor, it would be wrong to say that historians of science have come to grips with the reasons for a dormant scientific culture during the period till the turn of this century.

Now the impact of the Western scientific culture was beginning to be felt and indigenous efforts in modern science gave rise to such remarkable men of science like the Srinivasa Ramanujan, J. C. Bose, C. V. Raman, etc. By 1947 nine Indian scientists had been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society of London. The coveted Nobel Prize to C. V. Raman in 1930 was ample proof of the fact that Indian science was once again on the world map and its practitioners at par with world calibre.

The post-Independence era saw the emergence of organized research and a technological thrust to the Indian industry. Credit for this goes to visionaries like Jawaharlal Nehru and eminent architects of science in modern India like Homi Bhabha and Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar. The country owes it to these eminent men for the network of research institutions, the scientific manpower, the industrial infrastructure and technological base that exists today as well as the remarkable achievements, comparable to the developed nations, in the fields of atomic energy, space technology and defence.

The Indus Valley civilization characterized by the excavated historic cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa (now in Pakistan), and other flourishing civilizations, brought to light by the more recent excavations at Kalibangan in Rajasthan, Lothal in Gujarat and other places in the country, are evidences of the achieve-



Mohenjodaro: Excavated remains show elaborate town-planning and domestic architecture, 2500 BC.

ments during the eight centuries or so after 2500 BC Town planning and techniques of building and construction was clearly of a very high order in these cities. These reflect a prevalence of scientific ideas, particularly geometry, during that time.

Apart from evidences for a predominantly agriculture-based economy and practice of wide-ranging arts and crafts, findings give ample proof of the technical skills and their utilization for social goals that formed part of these ancient societies. Lothal, for example, reveals the existence of a flourishing maritime activity including ship-building. It was also noted for pottery and copper-bronze metallurgy.

With the march of Aryans from Central Asia around 1500 BC, the pursuit of science and technology in India acquired early period of history. Metal working which perhaps was of great significance because of its application in agriculture gave rise to a 'Megalithic culture' which spanned from 600 BC to about 200 AD; particularly important in this connection was the working of iron.

Techniques of metallurgy, particularly iron metallurgy, had advanced a great deal in India compared to other parts of the world. The great copper statue of the Buddha discovered in Sultanganj in Bihar and the iron pillar of 5th century AD in Delhi, which has remained rust-free till date, have no parallels in the metallurgical achievements of that period anywhere else in the world. Similar works of iron metallurgy are found elsewhere too, indicating that the technique lasted for many centuries. India is also the origin of the technique for making what is today known as the Damascus or wootz steel. Some inkling of the methods of iron smelting and steel making used by the men of yore can be obtained from the techniques used by the tribals of Bastar even today.

In several ways artillery represented the highest achievements in industrial technology during the 16th and 17th century and it was a natural development in a society highly advanced in metallurgy. The manufacture of cannons was a major industry. By the end of the 16th century, the heaviest guns were being cast in India. Another aspect of the artillery was the use of rockets made of bamboos with iron cylinders containing combustible materials.

Cannon on the ramparts of Jaisalmer fort.

As the Indian scientific culture grew, there was a cross-fertilization of ideas among the various civilizations of the world. Indian scholars began to assimilate and adapt knowledge from the Hellenistic and Islamic traditions and also notably from China particularly in the areas of medicine, paper technology, etc. The Persio-Arabic Unani medical system began to influence the Indian Ayurvedic system (13th-14th century) with the advent of Moghuls.

More significant, however, has been the flow of knowledge from here to the West through Arabic scholars. Al-Andalusi, the 11th century Arab astronomer and historian of science, discovered India's philosophical wisdom and scientific developments and described the notable Indian achievements in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, medicine and metal-working in his Kitab Tabakat al-Umam. And through Arab scholars, Indian knowledge travelled to Latin medieval Europe.

In the 8th century the works of astronomy and mathematics of Brahmagupta (the *Brahmasphuta Siddhanta* and *Khandakhadyaka)* had been translated into Arabic. Al-Khwarizimi explained the Indian decimal system of enumeration. These had the effect of spawning many noted exponents of Indian mathematics and astronomy, the most noted among them being Al-Biruni of 11th century. From the Arabs the Indian scientific ideas of the medieval period passed to Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries through men like Adelard of Bath, John of Seville, Robert of Chester, Villedieu, Sacrobasco and Leonardo Pisano.

Indian knowledge of medicine and surgery too found its way to Europe. Al-Razi of 9th/10th century incorporates in his book *Kitab-al-Hawi* which was later translated into Latin as *Liber Continens* by Moses Farachi in the 13th century enabling the Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda, to be known in Europe as well.

Clearly, Indian civilization up to this period was characterized by scientific thought, a holistic philosophy and technical skills at par with contemporary achievements in other civilizations of the world, and in some cases far more advanced. However, developments in the Indian society in the next few centuries led to a highly feudalistic structure and internecine strifes that resulted in a period of scientific stagnation. Irrational thinking, superstitions and ritualistic practices prevailed. These served to destroy the glorious scientific traditions of the past and when the scientific and industrial revolutions took place in the West, India appears to have hardly responded to the sweeping changes. It was under these conditions that India came under colonial domination.

The British rulers did develop science and technology in India but basically to cater to the requirements of the then existing government and British commercial interests. Notable Indian achievements of that period like the concept of smallpox vaccination, textile, steel and paper technologies were abrogated by the British to serve their interests back home.

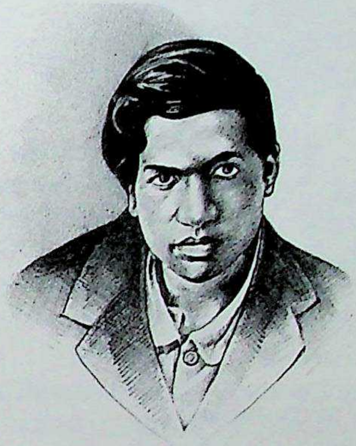
From that perspective the British also set up a number of scientific institutions and organizations which include the first comprehensive survey mapping of the country, the nationwide network of meteorological observatories which later became the India Meteorological Department (1875), the Geological Survey (1851), the Archaeological Survey (1867), the Bombay Natural History Society (1883), the Botanical Survey (1890) and the Zoological Survey (1916). Colleges of agriculture were established from 1880 and an important institution called the Asiatic Society was founded by Sir William Jones in 1784 which had begun publishing papers from the mid-19th century in physics, chemistry, biology and medical sciences.

The real Indian awakening to modern science, however, came about three quarters of a century prior to Independence through the efforts of a large number of Indian scholars who were motivated by the freedom struggle and influenced by Western liberal thought. In 1876 Mahendra Lal Sircar founded the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS) in Calcutta where Indian scholars could be trained, carry out original scientific research without any foreign tutelage.

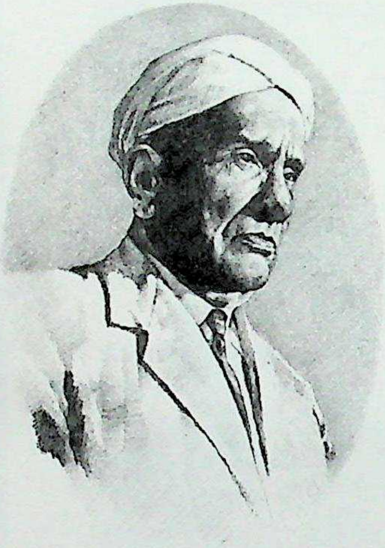
The Association became the trailblazer in a national effort for the promotion of science in India based on self-reliance and produced such great scientific minds like Sir C.V. Raman, S. N. Bose, Meghnad Saha and S. K. Mitra. This patriotic environment of Calcutta produced P.C. Ray who pioneered an indigenous chemical and pharmaceutical industry. In the field of fundamental research Sir J. C. Bose was the earliest of pioneers and one of the first in the world to demonstrate the production and detection of electromagnetic waves of wavelengths from 5 to 25 mm and established their characteristics. He later developed sensitive instruments for the accurate measurements of biophysical parameters relating to plant growth and behaviour.

Indian science scaled new heights with the work of C. V. Raman at the IACS and the discovery of the Raman Effect in 1928 for which he got the Nobel Prize. Raman built a major school of physical sciences in Calcutta and later at Bangalore where he worked at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the Raman Research Institute which he founded.

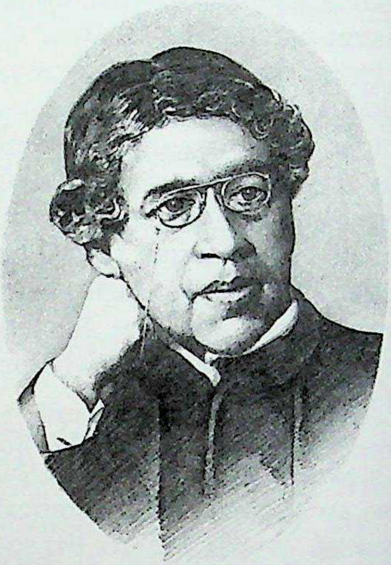
Particular mention must also be made of the work of S. N. Bose, an outstanding theoretical physicist, which led to the so-called Bose-Einstein statistics in the behaviour of elementary particles of nature, the mathematical wizardry and genius of Srinivasa Ramanujan, who had no formal university education and whose conjectures and formulae have opened up new vistas of research in mathematics for years to come, the research findings of K. R. Ramanathan and S. K. Mitra in atmospheric and radio sciences, the work of P. C. Mahalanobis in theoretical and applied statistics with applications to national development which was to be later used in the central planning process in the post-Independence era, the engineering feats of M. Visvesvarayya who laid the foundations for self-reliance in executing large complex projects of dams, irrigation schemes, etc.


Srinivasa Ramanujan, the Mathematical Wizard.

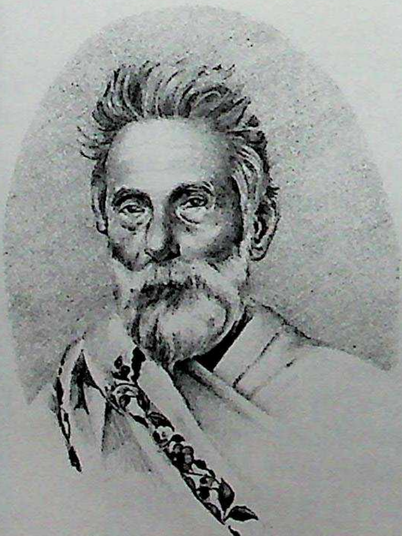
During the British period three major universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. This grew to 20 universities at the time of Independence. Apart from Calcutta, centres of scientific activity developed in Banaras, Allahabad, Aligarh, Delhi, Bombay, Pune, Hyderabad, Waltair and Bangalore. The IISc in Bangalore was established in 1911



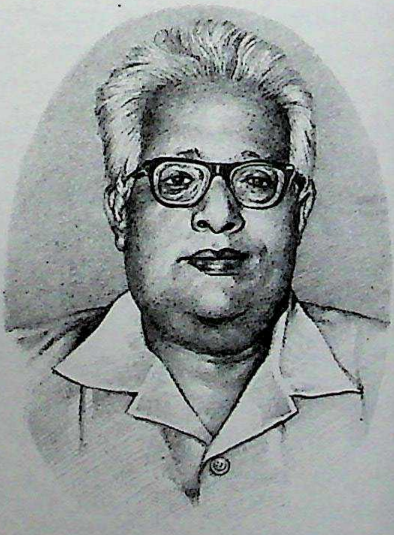
Sir C.V. Raman.



Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose.



Sir Prafulla Chandra Roy.



Sir Satyendranath Bose.

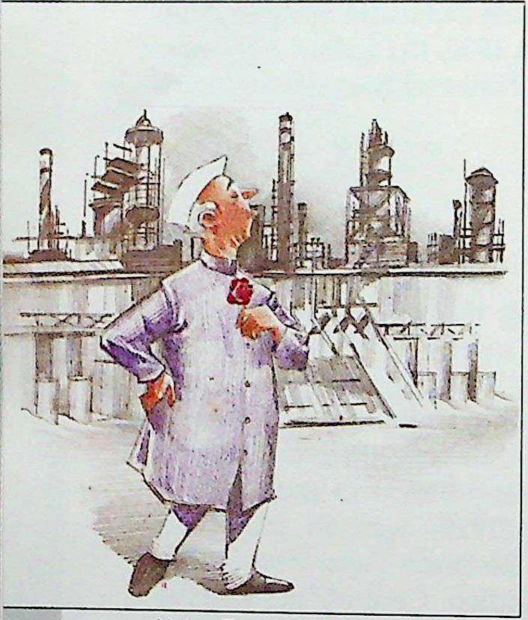
and continues to be a major centre of Indian science till this day.

One of the developments during this period of renaissance in Indian science was the setting up of various institutional structures. The Indian Science Congress came into being in 1914, the National Academy of Sciences in 1930, the Indian Academy of Sciences in 1934 and the Indian National Science Academy in 1935.

The British government had set up the Industrial Commission (1916-18) to enquire into the industrial profile and the technical manpower needs of the country, and the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1927) to examine the problems of agriculture. Their recommendations, despite their limitations, gave some new thrusts and the establishment of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research (1929) was an important outcome. Agencies like the Indian Research Fund Association (1911), which later became the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and the Board of Industrial and Scientific Research (1940), the forerunner of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (1942), were established to meet the demands of the war situation.

In the last decade before Independence, the Indian National Congress set up a National Planning Committee (1938) which had a sub-committee on science and technology. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of planning for development was instrumental to this and as the chairman of the sub-committee, Nehru said: "It is science alone that can solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening customs and traditions, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people. Even more than the present, the future belongs to science and those who make friends with science."

While there was a scientific renaissance in the period leading to Independence, this base was largely in basic sciences and in educational institutions. Indian economy was not in good shape and agricultural growth rate was barely 0.3 per cent and the manufacturing industry—with the exception of textiles, certain extractive sectors and a large steel plant — was very small. It was Nehru's vision that gave rise to the thinking that science and technology should become crucial inputs to accelerate national development. The development of the necessary infrastructure for that took place after Independence.



Nehru Era: Development of infrastructure.

Nehru had remarked: "Planning is science in action and the scientific method means planning." True to his words science and technology became an integral component of successive five year plans. The First Plan, which started in 1952, emphasized the role of science thus: "In the planned economy of a country, science must necessarily play a specially important role.... A balanced programme of research covering every sector of the economy is, therefore, essential for the development of the country."

With the above objectives in view the Plan laid emphasis on the development of infrastructure. This led to the setting up of a chain of national laboratories and research institutions in essential disciplines in different parts of the country under the CSIR. Also, two other main areas of thrust were the development of the atomic energy programme, and thereafter the space programme as its off-shoot.

The Second Plan sought to further the objectives of the First Plan by strengthening the existing research facilities, coordinate research programmes among various national agencies, train and generate manpower and their utilization. As part of this general thrust to science Nehru moved, in March 1958, the Scientific Policy Resolution (SPR). Its adoption by the Government of India was proof of the nation's faith in using science and technology for the development of the society.

The aims of this policy were, among others, "to foster, promote and sustain, by all appropriate means, the cultivation of science and scientific research in all its aspects pure,applied and educational; to ensure adequate supply, within the country, of research scientists of the highest quality and to recognize their work as an important component of the strength of the nation; and in general to secure for the people of the country all the benefits that can accrue from the acquisition and application of scientific knowledge."

Over the successive five-year plans, the role of science and technology in development began to be recognized more and more and research and development activities have received enormous support from the government. In the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) a major step was initiated to formulate a science and technology plan which led to the constitution of expert panels for different areas of science and technology under the National Committee on Science and Technology and their recommendations were integrated at the level of the Planning Commission. A notable aspect of the S&T plan was the purposeful dialogue among scientists and technologists from various organizations on the one hand, and economists and administrators and other professional groups, on the other.

From the Sixth Plan onwards efforts have been directed at evolving mechanisms to integrate capabilities in S&T with other efforts relating to national development, particularly for the upliftment of the rural poor and for improving the economy of the country as a whole. To this end, for the Seventh Plan a Steering Group Report for Science, Technology and Environment was prepared based on extensive discussions with a large number of scientists and technologists. After this Report the S&T plan had emphasized a mission - (goal) - oriented approach for S&T programmes and projects to achieve the desired results within a time period. A number of frontier/ thrust areas have been identified and taken up in this mode.

The finalization of the Eighth Plan, which ought to have begun in 1990-91 but for the political events which have delayed it, is yet to take place but the S&T plan component is likely to lay more emphasis on making domestic research and development (R&D) efforts more competitive in view of the liberalized industrial policy that has delicensed several sectors of the industry and would allow free inflow of imported technology.

The rapid growth in scientific infrastructure and the manpower it employed as a result of planning, and the fact that the governmental sector is the main vanguard of research efforts in the country, called for high-level administrative structures and bodies to advise the government on appropriate policy frameworks and priorities for proper implementation of programmes as envisaged by the planning process.

— Advisory Committee for Coordinating Scientific Work (ACCS) — 1948.

— Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) — 1956.

— Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SACC) — 1956.

— Committee on Science and Technology (COST) — 1968.

— National Committee on Science and Technology (NCST) — 1971.

— Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SACC; Reconstituted) — 1981. Alongside a Cabinet Committee on Science and Technology was also set up under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister to oversee and provide policy guidelines for the development of S&T.

— Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (SAC-PM) — 1986. Along with this body of scientists and technologists from outside the government system, a scientific adviser to the PM was also appointed.

— National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) - 1990 under the chairmanship of the PM as a policy-making body for science and technology.

The S&T plan of the Fifth Five Year Plan was, unfortunately, not backed by an appropriate technology policy resolution for long. The Technology Policy Statement (TPS) was formulated in January 1983. The main aims of the TPS, with an overall emphasis on food, health, housing, energy and industry, are to attain technological competence and self-reliance, to reduce vulnerability, particularly in strategic and critical areas, making the maximum use of indigenous resources, to provide maximum gainful employment to all strata of society, reduce demands on energy, specially from non-renewable resources, preserve ecological balance, harmony with the environment and improve the quality of the habitat.

The abovementioned structures in different sectors and policy frameworks have helped towards coordinated development of capabilities in the most important and emerging areas of science and technology.

In the severe drought year of 1966-67 India had to import in significant quantities. Many had predicted that India would never be able to produce enough food to meet the needs of population that was growing at the rate of 2.6 per cent. It was then that the highest priority was given to the achievement of selfsufficiency in food by strengthening all links from research up to production.

India has a great diversity of agro-climatic conditions and a great variety of agriculture. In the scientific technology of agriculture in the first six decades of this century several breakthroughs had been made such as improved varieties of rice and wheat. It was in 1965 that the ICAR was restructured into a fully autonomous organization which resulted in advances in diverse areas of soil and water management techniques, crop sciences, livestock, fisheries, farm machinery and implements and transfer of improved technologies. A re-patterning of the genetic structure of crops, through the Green Revolution, was an important factor in the productivity of crops.

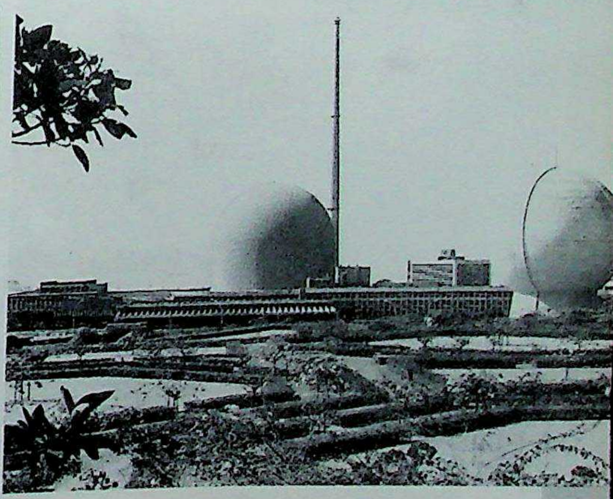
By 1989-90, the food production rose to 172.8 million tonnes compared to 52 million tonnes in 1952. Particularly high growth rate of 4.5 per cent in wheat and 2.75 per cent in rice has resulted in overall growth rate of 2.63 per cent between 1967 and 1987. However, availability of foodgrains per capita has increased only slowly given the present population growth rate of 2.25 per cent. The target for the turn of the century has been placed at 250 million tonnes. Scientific and technological inputs through developments in life sciences, modern weather forecasting techniques, satellite

Above : Rice plantation,and Below : The Bhakra Nangal Dam.

remote sensing, water management etc, have been brought into play to achieve this.

The development, control as well as use of atomic energy for for peaceful purposes are the prime objectives of India's atomic energy programme which is the result of Homi J. Bhabha's vision in 1944. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was set up as early as 1948 by a Parliamentary Act to realize this vision entirely using indigenous capabilities.

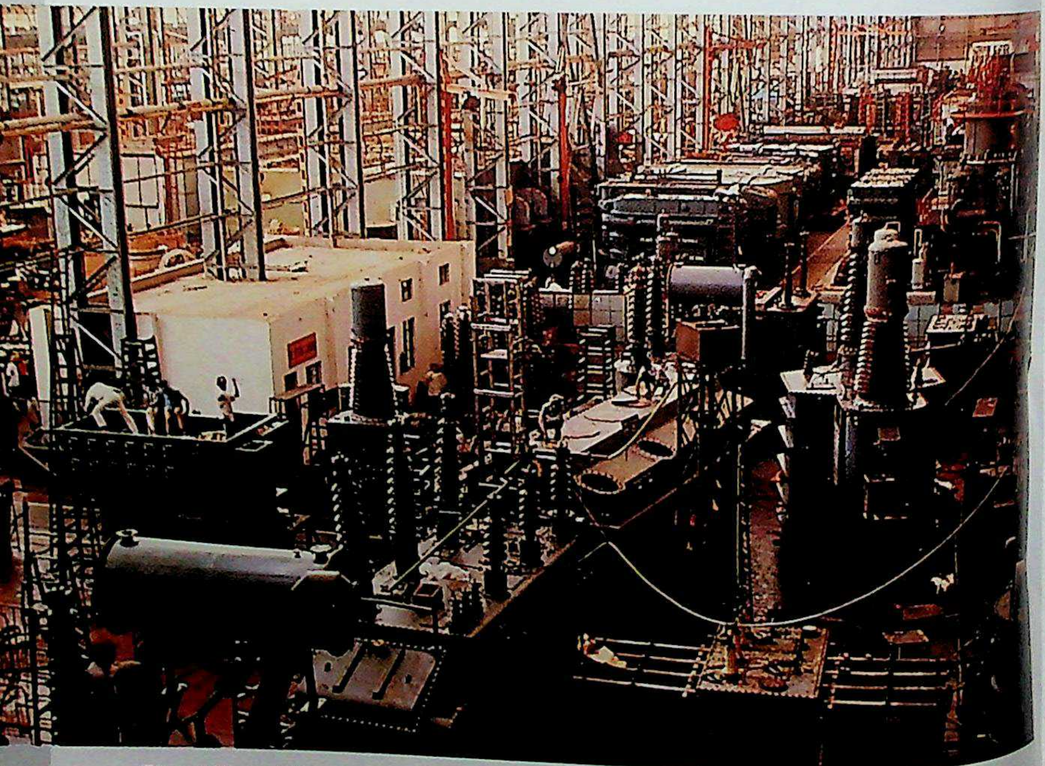
India's overall, long-term fuel cycle strategy includes a first phase in which natural uranium-fuelled reactors would produce electric power as well as plutonium; a second phase in which plutonium-fuelled fast breeder reactors would produce power and more plutonium as well as uranium-233, using the vast resources of thorium in the country; and the third phase in which uranium-233 thorium breeder reactors would produce power. India is one of the few nations which has established its own capabilities over the entire nuclear cycle, right from exploitation, mining, extraction and conversion of nuclear materials, fuel fabrication, heavy water production, design and construction of reactors, to reprocessing spent fuel and waste management.



Above : Homi J. Bhabha.
Right : The Atomic Energy Centre in Bombay named after him.

Today an operationalized nuclear power production capacity of 1465 megawatt (electric) exists produced by seven reactors of which three are of standardized indigenous design of 235 — MWe pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWRs). The DAE has set itself a target of 10,000 MWe by the year 2010 and to move towards that India is now moving into the area of fast breeders as well as into 500 MWe PHWR systems. Having established a comprehensive range of capabilities in the field of nuclear science and technology India has come a long way from the visions of Nehru and Bhabha. Indian nuclear scientists are now in a position to export nuclear-related technologies.

The first developments in electronics in the country came soon after Independence with the setting up of public sector production units for the manufacture of telecommunication and defence equipment. There was also production of relatively unsophisticated consumer items in the private sector. The



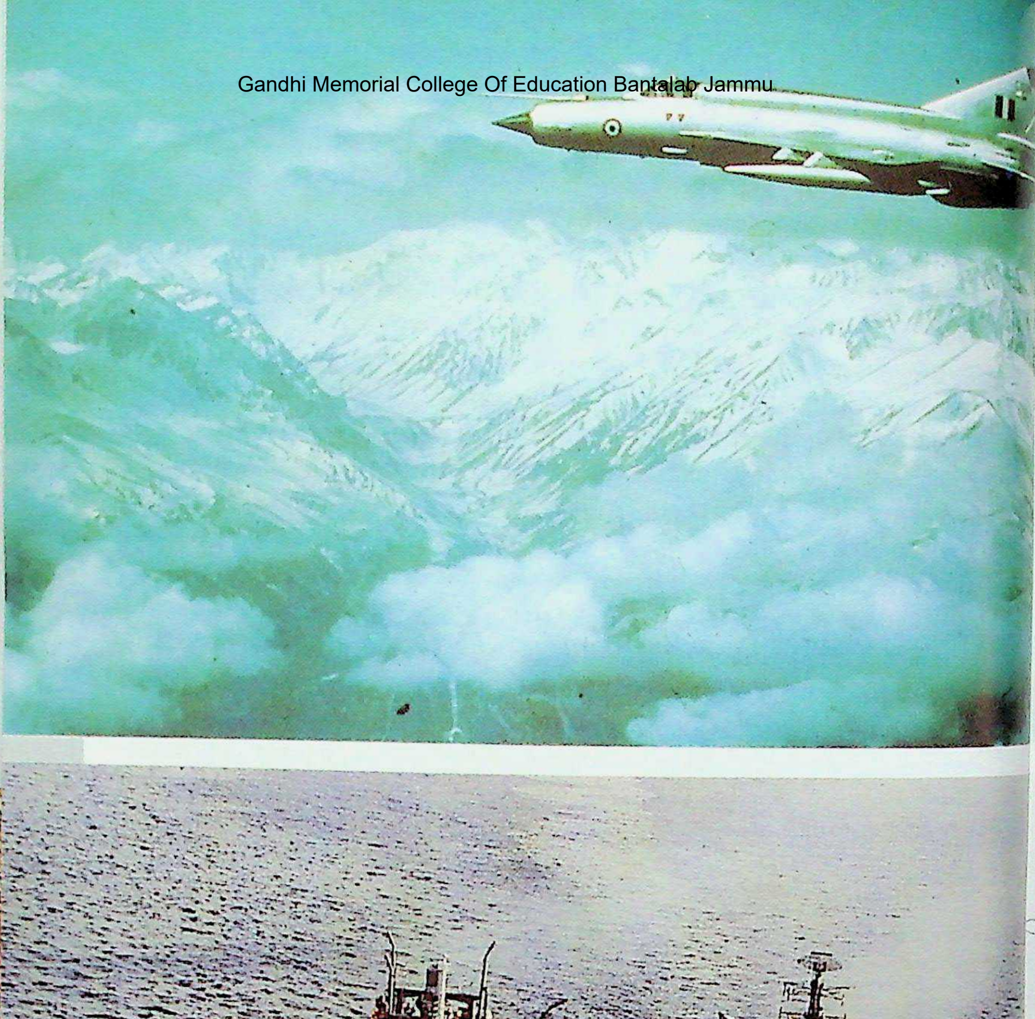
Bharat Heavy Electricals.

shortcomings noticed during the Sino-Indian hostilities in 1962 gave high priority to this sector. The Bhabha Committee on Electronics was set up which submitted its Report in 1966 providing the blueprint for an integrated approach to research, production and use of electronic items.

In 1970, the Department of Electronics and the Electronics Commission was set up for developing integrated and self-reliant electronics capabilities in the country. There have been many accomplishments in the area in terms of the geographical spread of the industry and the development of State Electronics Development Corporations. From a meagre production of 430 million rupees in 1964-65, electronics production in 1989-90 was 90,100 million rupees.

A whole range of sophisticated equipment have been designed and produced indigenously which include radars of various types, sonars, automatic data handling systems, radio engineering, communication networks, etc. The country has a state-of-the-art integrated chip design and fabrication unit at the Semiconductor Complex Ltd., a public sector unit at Chandigarh, which has a 3 micrometre level circuit integration capability what in technical parlance is called VLSIs.

The electronics industry today produces radios, TVs, computers (personal computers or PCs, minicomputers and mainframe computers), TV broadcasting equipment, telecommunication equipment, photovoltaics and a wide variety of electronic components and even raw materials. With rapid advances taking place all over the world in this frontier area of high technology, in India too the coming together of solid state electronics, computers, telecommunications, space and defence technologies is visible now and this technological push can enable India to acquire a contemporary position in the world. The success in the development of advanced telecommunication switches and exchanges by the government -sponsored project under the Centre for the Development of Telematics (C-DoT) is evidence of that. Similarly, given the vast expertise of computer software available in the country, the Indian software industry is well on its way to carving its niche in the world market.

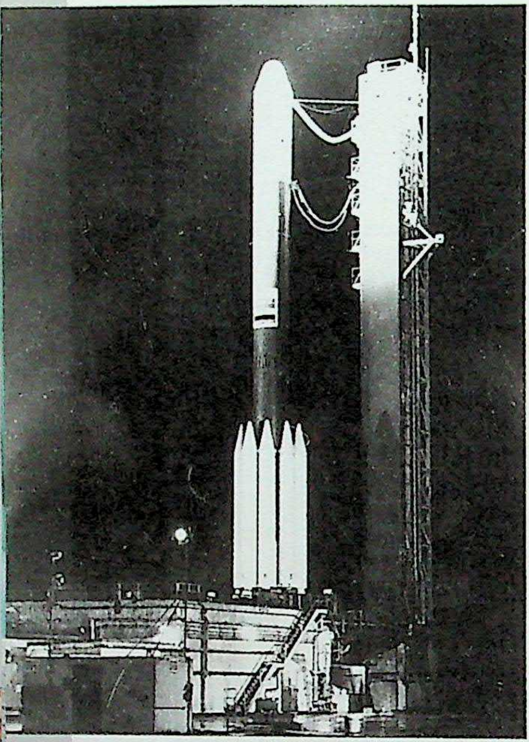


India's Defence Forces.

This is another area of scientific activity that was initiated by Nehru which has grown very significantly in the forty-three years since its early beginnings in 1948. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) came to be established in 1959 by bringing together the various technical components that existed within the Ministry of Defence and this was followed by the setting up of several laboratories. The real growth of the DRDO took place during the seventies and the eighties.

During these two decades a number of defence laboratories have taken up, for the first time, major hardwared systems for development, such as tanks, radars, sonars, military aircarft engines, secrecy equipment, guns, etc. Today the DRDO covers aeronautics, electronics, armaments, naval science and technology, combat vehicles, missiles, materials, food, shelter and clothing for defence services.

Financially, investments in defence research have been modest-well below 5 per cent - of the total defence expenditure. Of this Rs 45,440 million has been incurred between 1971 and 1991, 85 per cent has been incurred during the Sixth and Seventh Plan periods. And yet this critical input is already beginning to play a major role in establishing self-reliant capability for indigenous production of defence equipment valued at about 25,000 million rupees during the same period. The forged links among research units, defence services and production units are beginning to show results. With the scheduled introduction of several high technology systems into production in the Eighth Plan period — such as the Main Battle Tank 'Arjun', guided missiles 'Prithvi', 'Akash', 'Trishul' and 'Nag', Pilotless Target Aircraft (PTA), Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPV), Low Level Air Defence Radar (INDRA), Electronic Warfare Items and advanced concept fighter aircraft LCA — the value of indigenous production and foreign exchange savings arising out of defence research is likely to grow in the coming years.



Left : The first of the two multipurpose satellites, INSAT-IA being launched from Cape Canaveral on April 10th 1982.
Right : India entered a new era of space exploration when its cosmonaut, Sqn. Ldr. Rakesh Sharma began his space odyssey from Baikonour cosmodrome in the Soviet Kasakhastan on April 3rd, 1984.

The Space Commission was set up in 1972 and over these past two decades India has made rapid strides in the development and application of space technology for the socio-economic benefit of the nation. This has been particularly in areas where satellite-based systems have an inherent cost and operational advantage over ground-based systems. These include telecommunications, radio and TV broadcasting and remote sensing. The latter has particular relevance to agriculture, forestry, water management, meteorology, environmental monitoring and resource survey, in general. Towards these ends, Indian efforts in space technology have been directed at development and operationalization of indigenous satellites and launch vehicles.

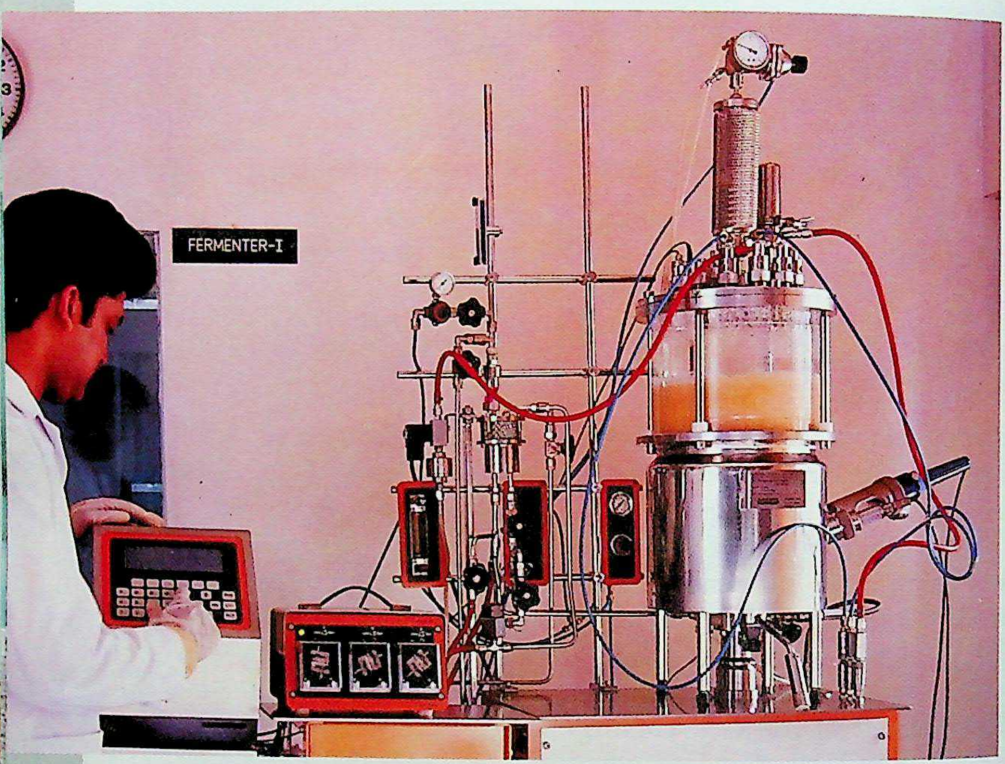
A large number of satellite systems have been designed indigenously. The early feasibility studies on the use of satellites for nationwide telecommunication and broadcasting, followed by the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) and the Satellite Telecommunication Project (STEP) led to the commissioning of a continuing and operational satellite-based telecommunication system called INSAT. Currently fourth in the series of geostationary satellites called INSAT-ID is extending the services. While INSAT-1 series have been designed by Indian scientists, they have been fabricated and launched by foreign agencies. Soon the Indian Space Programme will have entirely indigenously fabricated INSAT-2 series of satellites.

A major accomplishment has been the operationalization of the Indian Remote Sensing Project with the successful launching of indigenously designed and fabricated near-earth polar orbiting Indian Remote Sensing Satellites, IRS-1A and 1B. Both were launched from the Soviet Union, the first in March 1988 and the second in August 1991.

The other objective which is going at full steam is the development of indigenous launch capabilities. Next year the maiden launch of the Indian Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is due which will have the capability of launching into polar orbit IRS class of satellites. Following this will be the development of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) which can put into equatorial orbits 36,000 km above INSAT-2 type of telecommunication satellites by the mid-90s.

Western medicine, or the allopathic system as it is called, was introduced in India during the colonial times which has supplemented, if not largely displaced, the rich heritage of indigenous medical systems. India today has a very extensive system of health care, ranging from primary health care centres to referral hospitals which have competence in some of the most sophisticated biomedical techniques.

A major success in recent times has been the eradication of small-pox. The activities of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have accelerated after 1980 with the national commitment to the Alma Ata declaration of "Health for All by 2000 AD". Recognizing the great advances in modern biology, a significant research effort is under way to develop immunodiagnostic kits and immunoprophylactic systems (vaccines) for various diseases. The thrust is towards the primary health care system, health of the mother and the child and the family planning programmes, universal immunisation against the six



Research work in fermentation technology.

major killer diseases of diphtheria, cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis, pertussis and polio. Research at the frontiers of modern biology, which is very relevant in the Indian context, has been undertaken at various levels.

The Department of Science and Technology was set up in 1971 for supporting multi-disciplinary research in emerging and frontline areas. During its existence there has been a major impact on research carried out in educational and other institutions. Several national activities in thrust areas, the setting up of several national facilities, special science and technology programmes and a sustained effort to promote science and technology in the various states through the establishment of State S&T Councils have been initiated by the department. One of the more recent and ambitious programmes has been the National Programme on Superconductivity which has been funding and coordinating nationwide activity in this rapidly developing field. This department was responsible for starting national programmes in the areas of oceanography, non-conventional and renewable sources of energy, biotechnology and environment which, having grown in size and scope, are now handled by separate departments.

As a result of the recommendations of the Science Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SACC), a National Biotechnology Board (NBTB) was created in 1982 considering the spectacular developments taking place in the field the world over. A long-term integrated plan for manpower development, creating and strengthening infrastructural facilities, intensifying R&D efforts and setting up pilot plants resulted in the formation of a separate Department of Bio-Technology (DBT) in 1986. Sustained support from the government has given impetus to programmes in the areas of aquaculture, embryo transfer technology, oil palm demonstration, vaccines, biofertilizers, biological pest control, tissue culture and some pilot plants for biotechnology products. In order to develop close linkages among industry, R&D, academic and financial institutions (for venture capital funding) a new concept of Science-Industry Biotechnology Consortium, called the Biotechnology Consortium India Ltd. (BCIL), has been formed.

India has a vast coastline and its territory includes island groups. Oceanography has, therefore, been accorded an important role in the country's development and to foster R&D in this area a separate department of ocean development was established in 1982. This acquires particular significance with the declaration of the Law of the Sea which has extended economic jurisdiction of coastal states to an exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

The Indian research vessel "Gaveshani" was instrumental in the discovery of poly-metallic nodules in the sea-bed in the Indian Ocean resulting in India being accorded the pioneer investor status by the U.N. This allows exclusive rights to India to explore a selected area of the sea-bed up to 150,000 sq km of the mapped sea-bed. To further the work in the area of physical oceanography, a major research vessel "Sagar Kanya" was acquired. Similarly, for biological oceanography, "Sagar Sampada" has been acquired. An important event was the first Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica in 1982. Expeditions to the icy continent have since been successfully mounted on an annual basis. India has now acquired the status of a Consultative Member of the Antarctica Treaty.

In recent years India has also developed major capabilities in the high-risk, high-investment and high-technology area of off-shore oil drilling. This has enabled India, in a brief time span, to meet a significant part of its oil requirements from off-shore resources and has also resulted in capabilities across the whole spectrum of exploration, ocean engineering, drilling technology, fabrication of platforms and rigs, etc.

After the creation of the Department of Environment in

1980, programmes relating to environmental impact assessment, pollution monitoring and control, ecodevelopment, environmental awareness and education programmes, conservation of genetic resources, etc were launched. Important area developmental projects relating to the Western Ghats, Ganga Basin and Himalayan ecodevelopment were undertaken. Of significance are the measures taken to reduce pollution affecting the Taj Mahal in Agra, the analysis on the uniqueness of the Silent Valley in Kerala on the basis of which it was decided not to go ahead with the hydro electric project that would have otherwise led to submerging large parts of the unique ecological system. The department is currently engaged in assessing the environmental impact and other related problems associated with the Tehri dam in Uttar Pradesh and the Narmada Valley Project.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), established in 1942, set up a chain of civilian national laboratories in the country mainly through the efforts of S. S. Bhatnagar. Today it comprises 39 laboratories, 100 extension centres and two regional stations, two research associations and 10 polytechnology transfer centres. In several areas of basic sciences the CSIR has established centres of excellence, particularly in the fields of radiophysics, modern biology, geophysics, chemical synthesis and catalysis. There is significant industrial production based on technology licensed by the CSIR which range from the indigenous Swaraj tractor to 'Amul' baby food. Other accomplishments include petroleum refining processes, novel catalysts, range of modern pesticides with minimal environmental impacts, leather processing, high quality titanium substrate insoluble anodes, corrosion resistance technologies, testing and designing of aircraft, standards, several drugs and extended surveys in a variety of fields. The CSIR today constitutes a major base for science and technology for national development.

The above description offers a brief survey of the diverse nature of work in various sectors of science and technology in India since Independence. This is evidence of the importance that the government places on the use of science and technology for socio-economic development of the country which has resulted in vigorous measures to grow a wide spectrum of capabilities and competence and these achievements are by no means small.

Renowned Industrialist, JRD Tata with Human Resource and Development Minister, Arjun Singh.

The Infrastructure for S&T

Science and technology activities in India are undertaken by institutions/units/departments which can be classified under the following sectors:

- Central (Federal) government
- State (Provincial) governments
- Higher education sector
- Public sector industry
- Private sector industry
- Non-profit institutions/associations

The extent of S&T efforts in different sectors varies in terms of quantum of resources deployed and the types of S&T activities undertaken.

The scientific departments under the Central government include the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), the Department of Electronics (DoE), the Department of Space (DoS), the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Department of Ocean Development (DOD), the Department of Environment (DoEn) and the three departments — the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and the Department of Bio-Technology (DBT) — which form part of the Ministry of Science and Technology itself. Together, there are about 130 specialised research laboratories under these departments.

Besides, there are other Central government ministries/departments which have a number of research institutions under their administrative and financial control. In addition there are in-house R&D units of public sector industries which are mostly under the administrative control of the Central government but there are a few which are either under the State governments or in the joint sector of Central and State governments. The private sector also have their own in-house R&D units. These in-house R&D units are registered with the DSIR for availing of fiscal incentives which the government gives in proportion to the R&D investments made.

The State governments have their own research institutions which mainly include agricultural universities and their research stations besides having other research institutions directly under different departments of the State governments. The higher education sector, that includes universities, undertake research activities (basic and applied) through their own funds as well as through projects sponsored by major scientific departments of the government. The non-profit research institutions/associations are an altogether different intellectual paradigm. The form of the knowledge of that period can be called the Vedic science which had a holistic and philosophical perspective and a universal vision. Central to Vedic thinking was the philosophy of the existence of a natural universal law and a natural order, which provided the conceptual framework to the practice of science too, a vision that can be obtained only in modern Western science.

This philosophical premise naturally led to explaining a maximum number of observed phenomena on the basis of a minimum number of postulates: five senses, five elements

Jantar Mantar observatory , Jaipur, built by Maharaja Jai Singh,17 th century A D.

(earth, water, fire, air and sky), etc. This thinking also gave rise to an atomistic view not only of the structure matter but amazingly, as had been conceived by the Jains (600-500 BC), of space and time as well. The Vedic Age or the Classical Age of India witnessed a ferment of intellectual activity which lasted till about 12th or 13th century AD bringing forth a wealth of knowledge and ideas in mathematics, astronomy, medicine as well as a variety of technical skills like metal working.

Undoubtedly the most fundamental contribution of Indian mathematics is the decimal system of enumeration and the concept of zero. During the same Vedic period Pythogorean geometry was developed in Sulva Sutras for the construction of altars. While there is evidence of mathematical discoveries even earlier, systematic development of mathematics can be said to have begun with Aryabhata I (5th century AD). The most productive period of Indian mathematics lasted till about 12th century during which Varahamihira (6th century), Brahmagupta (7th century), Mahavira (8th) and Bhaskara (12th) produced a wealth of mathematical treatises that include the first ever formulations of the concepts of algebra and trigonometry.

Then up to about the 18th century there appears to be a total absence of mathematical activity save for the Kerala school and Jagannata Pandita in the court of Maharaja Jai Singh of Jaipur (17th century), who translated Euclid's elements from Arabic to Sanskrit. Jai Singh himself was a keen astronomer and is famous for those massive masonry observatories in Jaipur, Delhi, Mathura, Ujjain and Varanasi — there is no trace of the one at Mathura — called Jantar Mantars.

The holistic Vedic view of life, and the environment around, gave rise to a medical science par excellence called Ayurveda around 2500 years ago. Apart from an empirical plant-based system for curing diseases, Ayurveda had a psychosomatic basis that included the systems of Yoga and Samkhya which aimed at achieving a harmonious existence of body and mind with the environment. Two treatises of the period, Susruta Samhita and Charaka Samhita, embody the medical and surgical knowledge that had been developed during that period, and the scientific rigour and depth in those accounts, that include a detailed materia medica and catalogue surgical instruments, are truly remarkable for the period in which they were written.

The Vedic society had a largely agriculture-based economy and technological advances revealed themselves in techniques of agriculture in the nature of effective use of the plough, cultivation of rice and other new grains. The idea of rotation of crops is India's contribution to world agriculture.

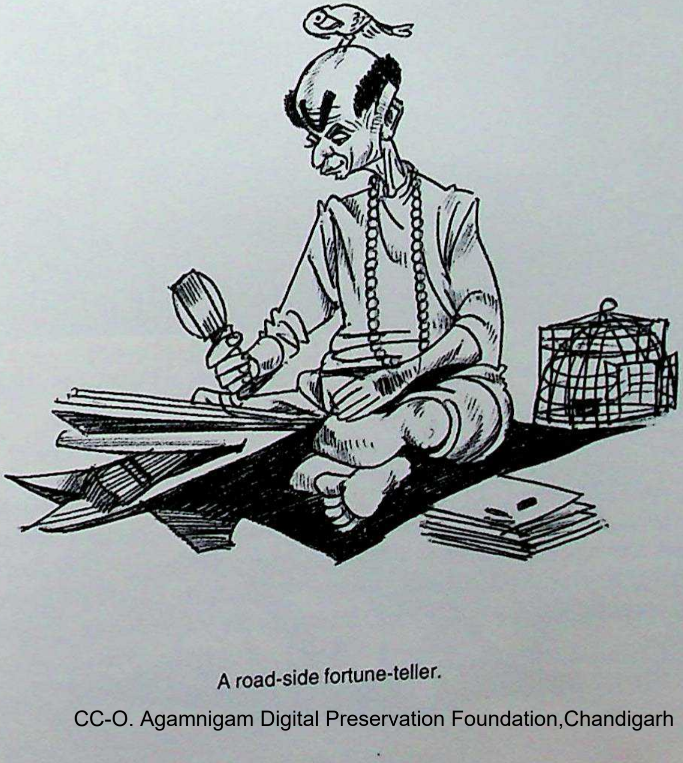
As regards science and technology at present there are nearly 180 universities (including the five Indian Institutes of Technology) – there were about 20 in 1950 – 6,040 colleges, 179 engineering colleges, 350 polytechnics, 107 medical colleges and 2,100 R&D institutions in the country.

The total stock of S&T manpower has increased from 0.19 million in 1950 to about 3.8 million in 1990 (thus registering a 20-fold increase during the period of 40 years) and the number of doctorates per year number 4,000 of which nearly three-fourths belong to pure science. However, in relation to population the stock of S&T personnel is not high. India has only 3.43 persons per thousand population.

Plan allocation for S&T has increased enormously over the Seventh Plan period indicating the high poriority that successive governments have accorded to S&T. It was only 200 million rupees in the First Plan, 1420 million in the Fourth Plan which rose to nearly 85,000 million in the Seventh Plan. The R&D expenditure (at 1980-81 constant prices) has also increased concurrenatly from about 223.3 million rupees in 1950-51 to 18,662.3 million (34,718.1 million at current prices) in 1988-89.

About 92.5 per cent of the governmental R&D expenditure was incurred by the Central government and by the state governments. Major scientific agencies and departments accounted for about 75 per cent of the expenditure and the rest came from other ministries and departments, like civil aviation and telecommunication, for example. The defence sector accounted for about 27 per cent of the expenditure. Nearly 98 per cent of the state level R&D expenditure is towards the development of agriculture and allied areas, the highest fraction (18.4 per cent) being the State of Maharashtra.

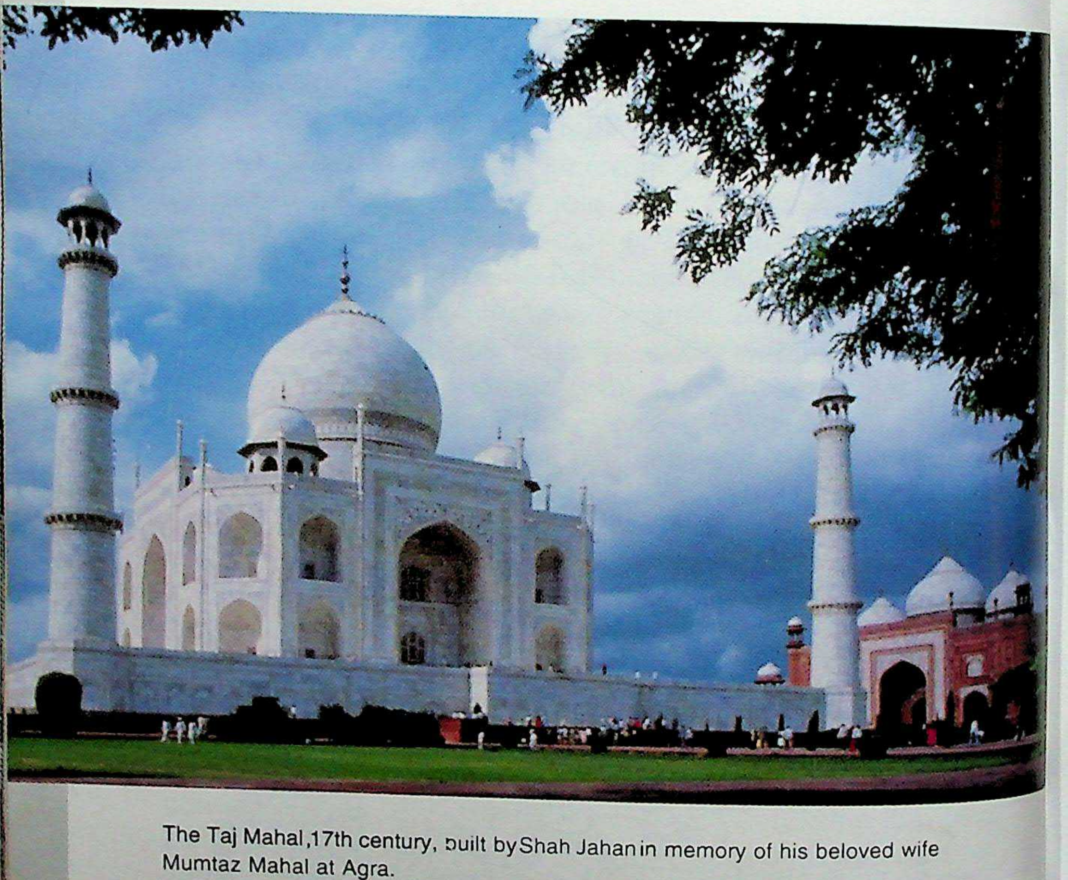
There are in all 1,026 in-house R&D units in the Indian industry, of which 895 are in the private sector. The share of industrial R&D in the total national R&D expenditure was 7251.1 million (20.9 per cent), roughly equally divided between the private and the public sector. Of this 1,297 million rupees was by defence industries and 1,180.3 million by electronics and electrical industries. However, industrial spending on R&D constituted only 0.72 per cent of their sales turnover and total national R&D expenditure constituted only 1 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) in 1988-89, compared to 0.23 per cent in 1958-59.



A road-side fortune-teller.

INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

GAUTAM BHATIA



The Taj Mahal, 17th century, built by Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal at Agra.

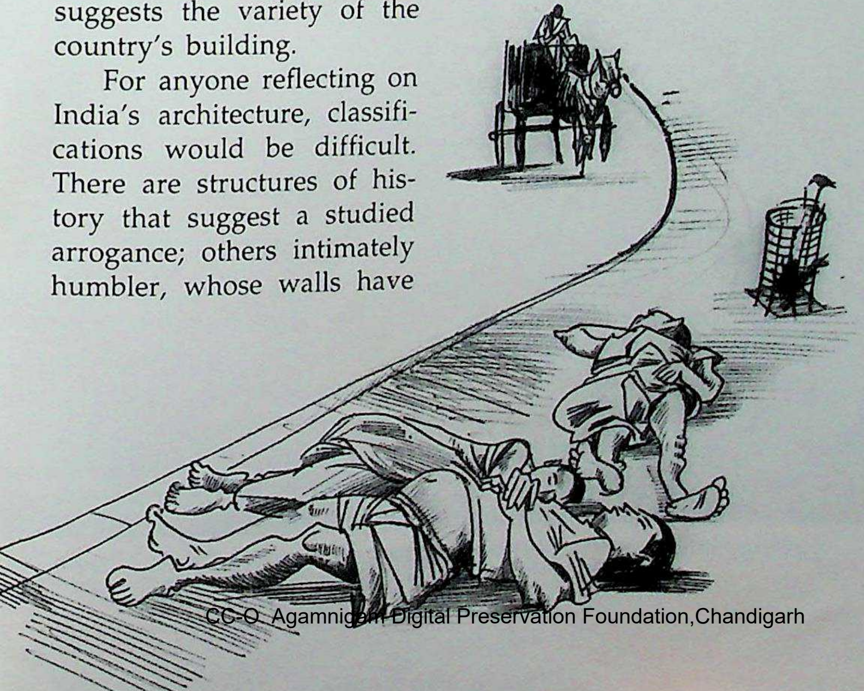
GAUTAM BHATIA is a Delhi-based architect and writer. He has worked extensively on housing and institutional projects in India and abroad. His recent low-cost hotels projects in Tanzania have received the 1992 Pan Africa Medal of Honour; while his essay entitled, "Is There Architecture in India" has been awarded the first prize for Criticism by the International Quarterly of Design.

AMERICAN artist Claes Oldenburg once said, " I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself". Perhaps Oldenburg, like film-maker Louis Malle, had been observing an Indian street. For it is here that life is at its most fulfilling.

The images are consistently programmed to reinforce the stereotype: a sacred cow sitting placidly in the fast lane, a man in a safari suit peeing against a sidewalk wall, a bevy of gargantuan multicolored matinee idols staring from a movie hoarding. Closer to the ground, there is the multiple rinse of habitual street preoccupations. A barber forms the lather in a plastic cup and applies it to a slovenly face, nearby a seven-year old grandson hawks the *Evening News*. Buildings push and shove, extend and encroach; people talk, sleep, walk, sit, eat, defecate, live and die. It is a scene, all too familiar. It is a view of India's angst, and architecture, Indians commercial treachery and philanthrophic excess, the coarseness and bluntness and sweetness and stupidity that makes it all worthwhile.

In comparison to such images, India's architecture pales into insignificance, becoming but a mere backdrop to such a spectacle. And yet, it is only such a street that most directly suggests the variety of the country's building.

For anyone reflecting on India's architecture, classifications would be difficult. There are structures of history that suggest a studied arrogance; others intimately humbler, whose walls have



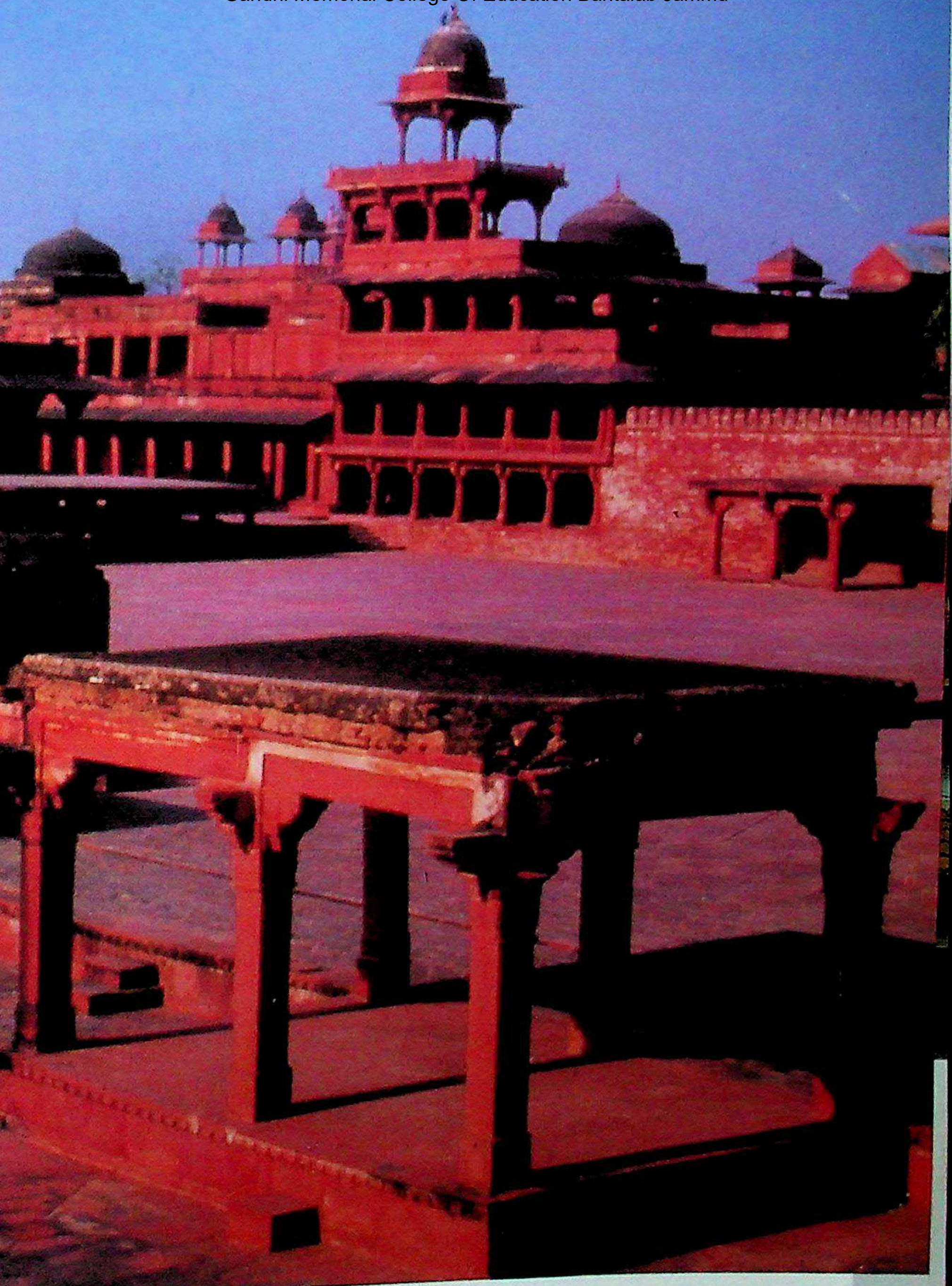
risen out of a disperate poverty. Then there are those that are classically propertioned, born out of some grandiose cosmic ideology, but sitting next to buildings intensely personal and utterly chaotic—the result of some private fetish or idiosyncrasy.

As types they range from monumental templexes and palaces to the blackest of slums; in material they vary from the iridescence of polished granite, to the transience of mud. Khajuraho, Fatehpur Sikri, Mandu, Jaisalmer and the Taj Mahal may be better known than Greater Kailash, Dharavi, Vasant Kunj or Nehru Place, for all their variety, for all their ecclesiastical doctrines, cosmic world view, their exceptional sturdiness and romance, their economy and delight, yet they are also part of the great museum of the country's architecture. Like the street, the public face of India provides—by ironic juxtaposition—the happy contradiction of its architecture.

"There is great richness in India," any well-meaning Indian will tell you. But the statement often has a hollow ring to it. For behind every great palace, temple or public edifice is a story of pettiness and intrigue, of treacherous patronage and architectural despotism. It is a story that few among the more sociologically conscious historians could deny. But it is nonetheless the story of architecture in India.

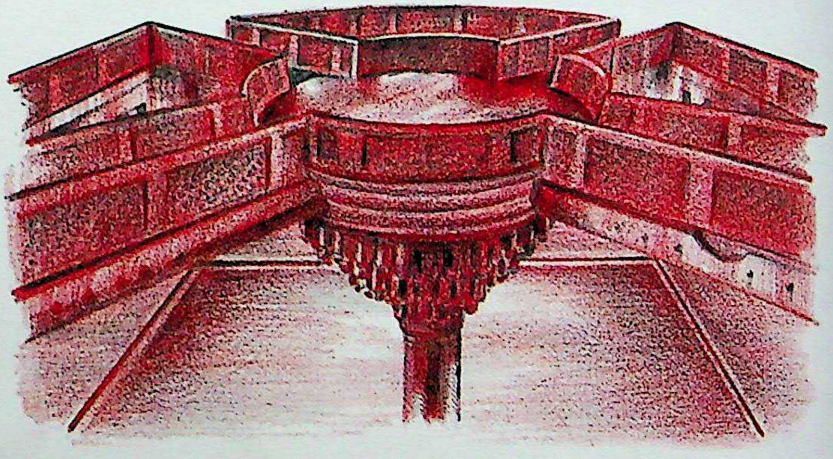
Throughout history in fact architectural megalomania was the most convenient ploy for a monarch to keep a permanent and tangible record of his greatness. Islamic rulers, like Akbar, asserted their might through palace, citadel, burial tomb and city gate. True, a certain madness was necessary in executing a whimsical idea like the construction of an entirely new city like Fatehpur Sikri but Akbar was never the one for convention. Breaking away from the axial aspects of previous city plans, the palace precinct was conceived as a series of staggered courts set squarely as terraces on the rocky site and enclosed by sandstone arcades. The greatness of the complex however was not in its deviations from symmetry but in the way stone was manipulated to suggest the specific intent of the ruler.

In the *Diwan-e-Am*, the court of public audiences, building components were deliberately overscalled in order to suggest the coming together of large numbers—the silent multitude paying obeisance to a gentle and glorious tyranny. In the *Diwan-*



Palace -fort complex at Fatehpur Sikri built by Akbar in red sandstone.

e-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, the Emperor perched on a sandstone column with radiating paths— the king at the very centre of the cosmos. This was architecture at its most whimsical.



Diwan-i-Khas, Fatehpur Sikri.

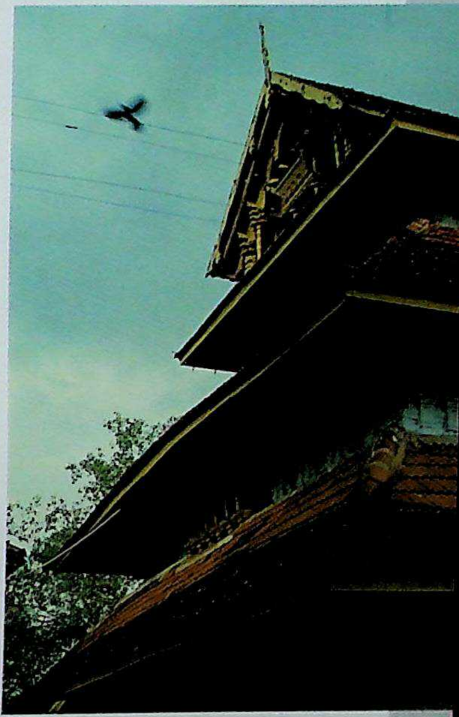
In nearby Agra is the greatest of all whimsical buildings. Seen through mostly foreign eyes it is for many the only reason for the trip to India. Mumtaz Mahal was a favourite wife, and after her death the memory of a remembered love drove the grieving emperor Shah Jahan into an exuberant and wilful architectural expression of those feelings: love and grief mingled and displayed in quiet splendour, in the ordered perfection of marble and landscape.

Rising as the familiar white silhouette along the banks of an often waterless Jamuna river, the line of historical precedence for the monument's design is impressive: dating to the Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, the Tomb of Timur Lane (Gur Amir) at Samarkand, to the relatively more recent Humayun's and Khan Khanan's tombs in Delhi. A common perception of progression through the landscape led the builders to a scheme of the traditional 'char bagh', a lucid Islamic composition of frames and closures, of walls concealing and gates revealing in a delicate balance of water, land and sky.

The entrance gate opens into an axial sequence of reflecting pools and stone pathways once lined by cyprus and especially selected varieties of flowering trees, and culminates in the raised podium on which the tomb sits, flanked by the four single migrants. The biaxial symmetry of the plan is emphasized in the main structure by the four corner chambers and linking corridors dispersed equally about the cenotaph, the marble burial mound of Mumtaz Mahal sitting squarely under the high central dome. (The bodies of both Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan are actually buried in the crypt below.)

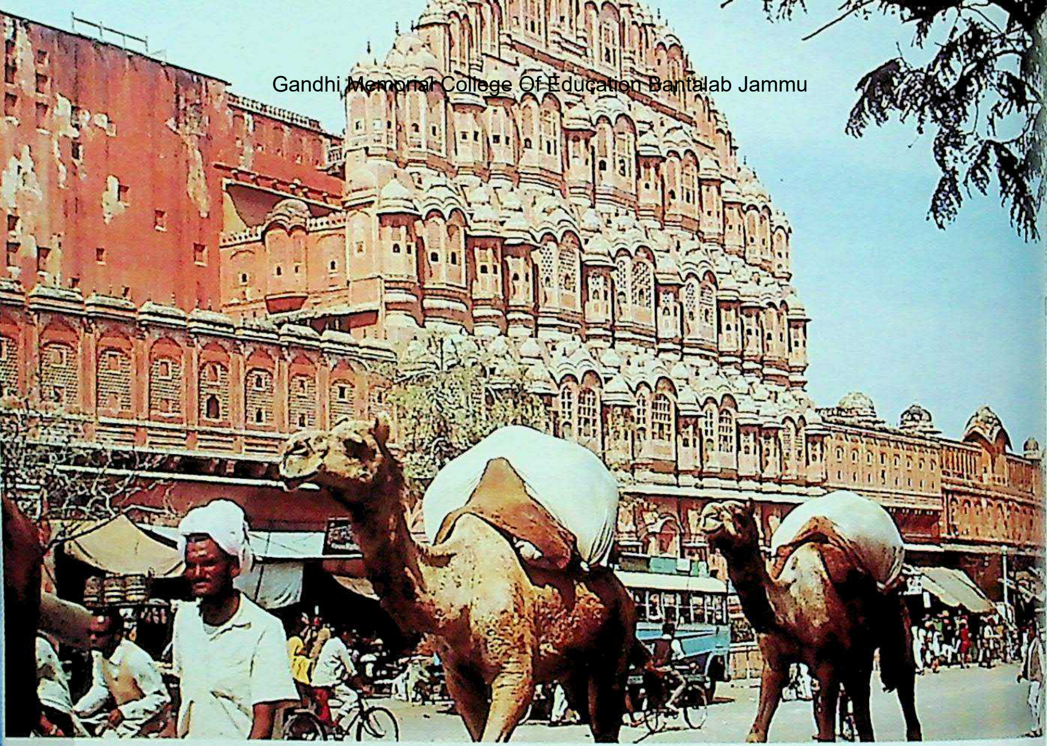
Inside, a secondary structure is raised above the drum, a kind of false dome which sets the acoustic and visual balance for the interior. The delicate acoustic sophistication that resulted was specifically designed to reverberate the recitations of the Quran within the chamber. In a clockwise movement around the tomb the four main doorways are framed in a literal recitation of the Quran, the particular 36th chapter which is read to a Muslim on his deathbed. Like the 'entasis' or visual balance achieved in the temple colonades of ancient Greece the Arabic script enlarges as the eye moves up and away to read the letters, so creating an illusion of consistent size.

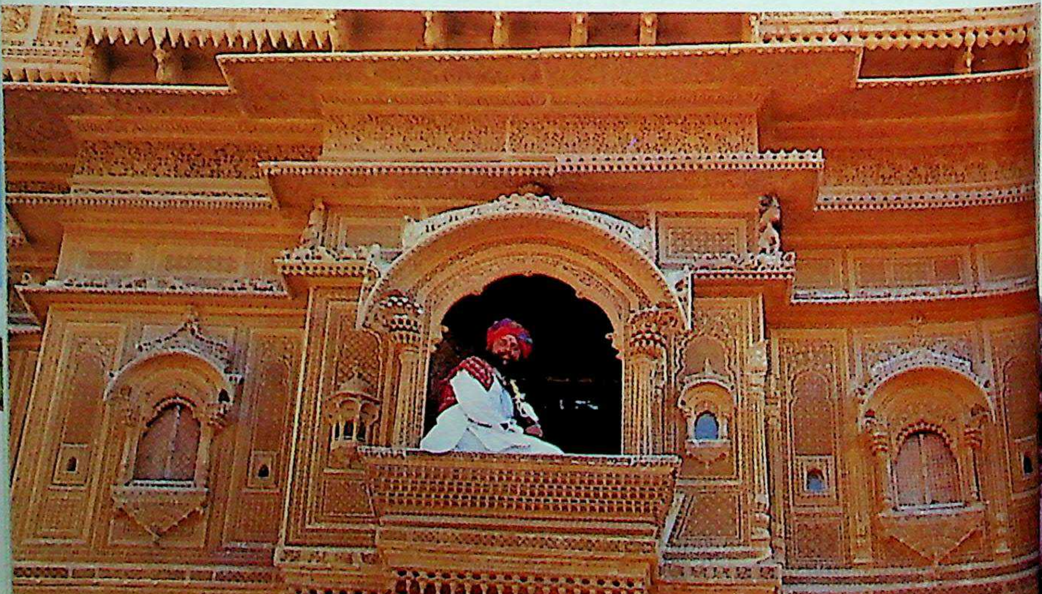
Another Taj Mahal of identical design but in black marble had been planned by Shah Jahan for himself on the opposite bank of the river. But upon his death, son Aurangzeb had other plans; and the placement of the insignificant gravestone alongside the centrally placed Mumtaz is attributed to Aurangzeb's less sentimental approach to passing.



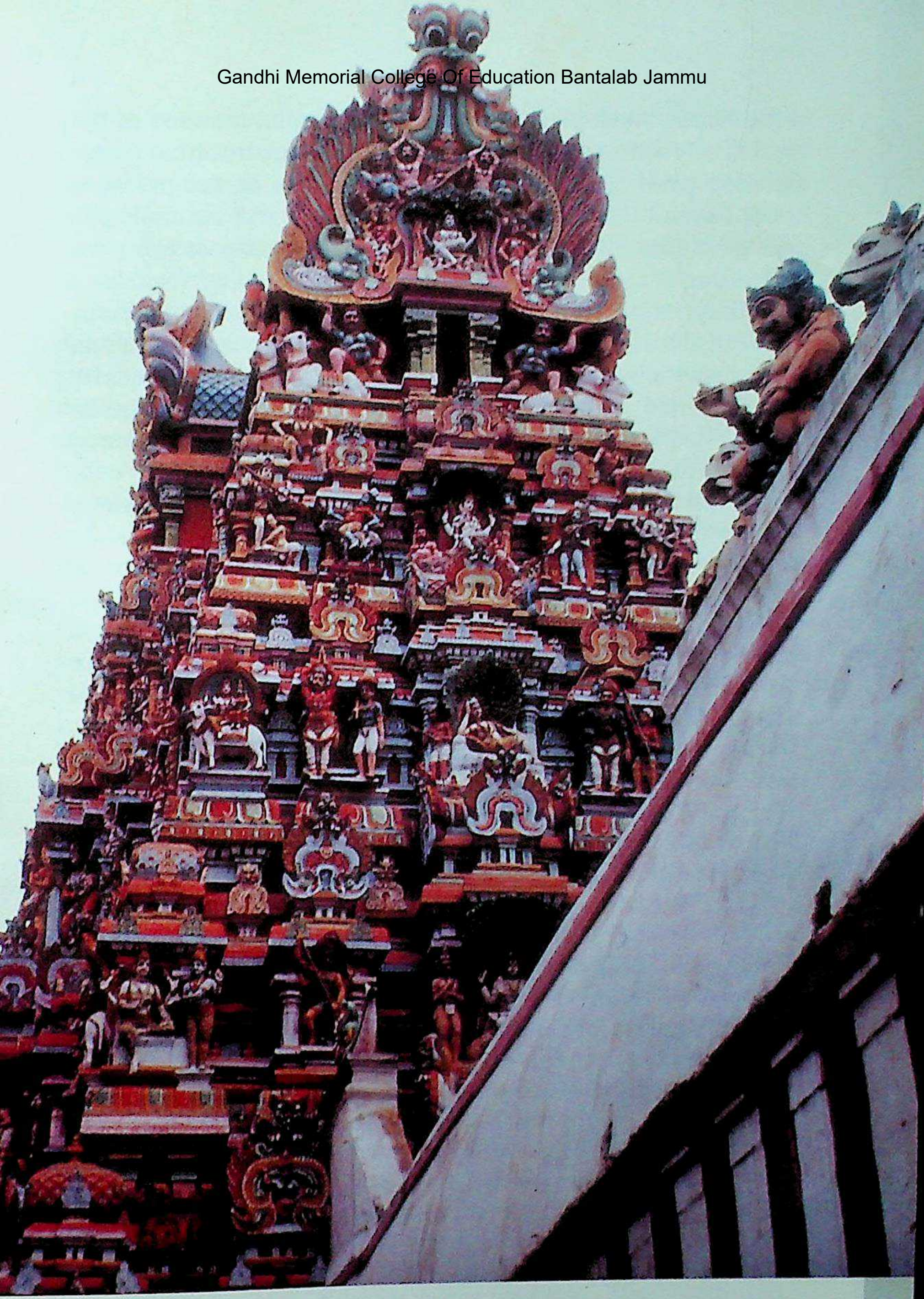
Padmanabhapuram Palace.

Expressions of architectural gardens were also reflected in palaces of other regions where building materials and styles were entirely different. The royal family of Travancore lived in the famed Padmanabhapuram palace near Trivandrum. At Padmanabhapuram the elements took on a level of retirement rarely matched in the architecture





Above : Hawa Mahal or Wind Palace Jaipur, Rajasthan. An architectural beauty in pink stone incorporating six storeys with eleven hundred doors and windows.
Below: Patwan Ki Haveli, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. Built in yellow stone with rich carving and breathtaking intricacy.



Meenakshi Temple, Madurai belonging to the 16-17th century A D. One of the most ornate gopurams of South India.

of the North. As at Sikri, the private residential quarters of the royal family were secluded on the upper floors, this time under the steep pitch of a wooden Kerala roof. The darker passages below housed the services, the storage areas and naturally the halls of public meeting. Wood was used liberally to form the supporting structure of column bracket beam, as well as a secondary infilling of intricate screens and louvers. Indigenous building traditions were developed to such a degree—all in service of the royal patronage. Even though the vast majority of labour and craftsmen who worked on the project lived in places of a less renowned tradition, humbly and silently working for their client for a period of four centuries.

Despite the inherent message of despotism in the monuments there is also another edge to the country's visible history. The diversity of India's architecture is also largely the outcome of a history of invasions. Because history in India has been made in this attitude of conquest, architecture too, from recorded history to the present, has been conceived in an attitude of territorial occupation. This is illustrated in the medieval fortresses of Rajasthan, the palaces and cities of the Mughals, the cantonments and imperial enclaves of the British Empire; even the manner in which the new city plans have helped to determine the layout of recent architecture only reinforces this idea of building as isolated entity—a place of symbolic import, to be cherished and protected.

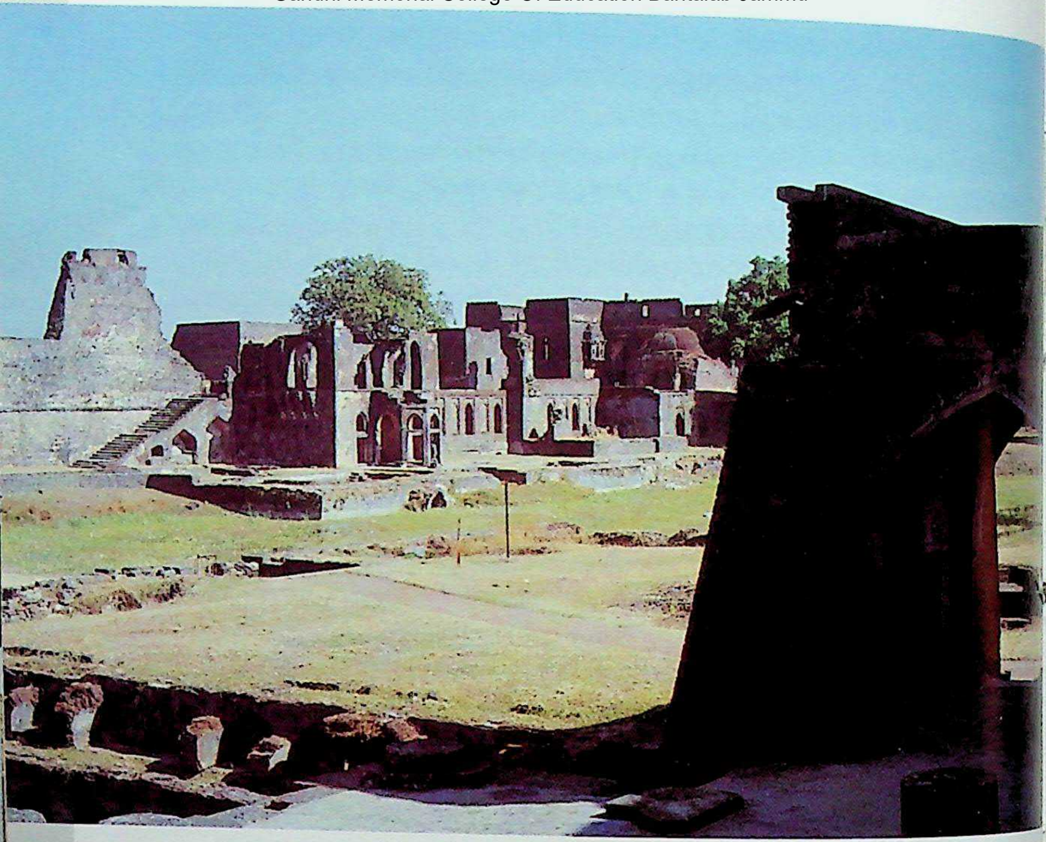
The Dravidian culture of the predominantly Hindu South is still visible in the vast temple complexes of Madurai, Rameshwaram, Konark, the cities of Vijayanagar and Hampi, the cave temples of Ellora and Ajanta. While these are the visible signs of architecture in South and Central India, the North remains predominantly Islamic, the results again of an 800-year-long territorial occupation that created a perceptibly distinct skyline in the places it effected. The mosque and minaret, tomb and palace, structured by an invading memory, crystallized into a unique blend of Indo-Islamic design. The various complexes it spawned, from Humayun's Tomb to Taj Mahal, Agra Fort to Fatehpur Sikri, Jahaz Mahal in Mandu to Surkhej in Ahmedabad, are the result of an indigenized tradition—Persia adapted to the harsher climate and trains of the subcontinent.

No assessment of Indian architecture can overlook the coming of the modern masters to the subcontinent. Le Corbusier in Chandigarh and Louis Kahn in Ahmedabad created complexes of an obsessive personal vision, and ideological clarity — generating ideas which continue to influence the work of succeeding generations.

Chandigarh was the architectural dream for an independent India. The city was built at a time when architects attached great importance to the width of roads, to concrete plazas and distinct residential and commercial enclaves; and if these separations symbolized a certain detachment from the real India, it was only because the city was meant to suggest a new democratic ideal. This was after all the first planned metropolis and so deliberately chose to ignore the confining attributes of the country's historic towns: Agra, Fatehpur Sikri or Jaipur.

The public buildings created at the Capital Complex in Chandigarh—the Assembly, the Hall of Justice and the Secretariat—were undeniably brilliant works of imagination. But whether they sprang from an Indian ethos, or had their inspiration in the complexes of Indian history, or whether their Indianness developed out of their site, or the nature of the materials, or how they weathered in the Indian climate, is all best left to architectural academicians. No post mortem is required to know that they were specific to the site and to the requirement. The particular relationships that they set up with each other and to the landscape were based on principles of monumental and axial planning. Critics are quick to claim that such planning is alien to India. And indeed they may have their point, but Corbusier had his reasons. He had chosen to focus attention on his Capital Complex by giving it a separate presence at the head of the city, the monumental edifices of the Secretariat, the Assembly and the Halls of Justice, with the dense backdrop of the Himalayas.

Unfortunately, today there is little of the initial promise of Chandigarh. Walking through it, now one sees only the silent memorials to a broken paradise. Concrete shells of a once enlightened awakening—withered and forlorn—streaked by the markings of numerous monsoons, they were a long time ago the symbols of India's post Independent tradition. The Secretariat, a pock-marked slab of endless obscurity, the Assembly building



Mandu, one of the inspirations for the IIM, Ahmedabad.

near by, squat with a wide-brimmed concrete hat, disconnected across an expanse of summer sun to a parabolic blur, the Halls of Justice. But the eye now perceives only the perspective of uncharted distance. Like disused barns at the edge of an airport tarmac, the buildings are like faded monuments sitting uncomfortably under the distant blur of a bluish mountain—ancient things, almost impressive in an isolated archaeological way.

Aspects of the ruined landscape were always of interest to American architect Louis Kahn who designed the cavernous Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. Kahn's spiritual preoccupation with the idea of silence and light invariably hinted at the discovery of some lost order. In Ahmedabad the vast spaces of the Institute of Management seemed to suggest to Kahn the order, the shade and quiet of the country's historic ruins. Mandu and Fatehpur Sikri, both cited as inspirations for this complex, were lost cities, but in their abandoned state they symbolized to Kahn the eternal qualities of Indian architecture. Consequently in his own resolution of the form for this institute the light and shade were tempered by the local tradition of brick construction, assembled in layers of walls, and so breaking the glare and moderating the harsh climate.

Such demands of location and culture effected both the activities to be housed within the building, as well as the architecture form with which this was to be expressed. The 65-acre campus is divided into three constituent elements: the institution—a U-shaped plan of library, offices and classrooms; the surrounding dormitories-units of student cells separated by courts, and the teachers' residences; linked bungalows around garden courts defining the periphery of the complex. All buildings are oriented in a way to take advantage of the prevailing winds, while the consistent use of lightwells, courts and loggies helps to minimize sun penetration.

One of the major philosophical considerations in the design was based on Kahn's belief that real learning takes place in the space where students meet naturally, and not just in the classroom. The architecture has been consequently designed to make special the connection between rooms. The wide galleries, the courtyards between lecture theatres, the triangular corridors of the student dormitories, are all meant to encourage student interaction and so facilitate learning.

Those of us visiting the Institute now, as tourists or architects, the buildings do not speak the ordinary language of architecture from a distance. The whole complex has the look—like Mandu and Fatehpur Sikri—of a ruin. Within this singular structuring of brick, Kahn attempted both—a rugged simplicity on the public face and a sensuous tactility on the interior. The weathering of the brick surfaces, the effects of sun, rain and corrosion were always felt to be positive attributes of buildings that showed their age. Brick was meant to stain with the monsoon and over the years the streaks scarred the red surface into black, into the petrification of a ruin.

Consistent with the self-protecting instincts of Moghul design were architectural ideas perpetuated by the British in India. In fact, the idea of fortification as a defence for the city

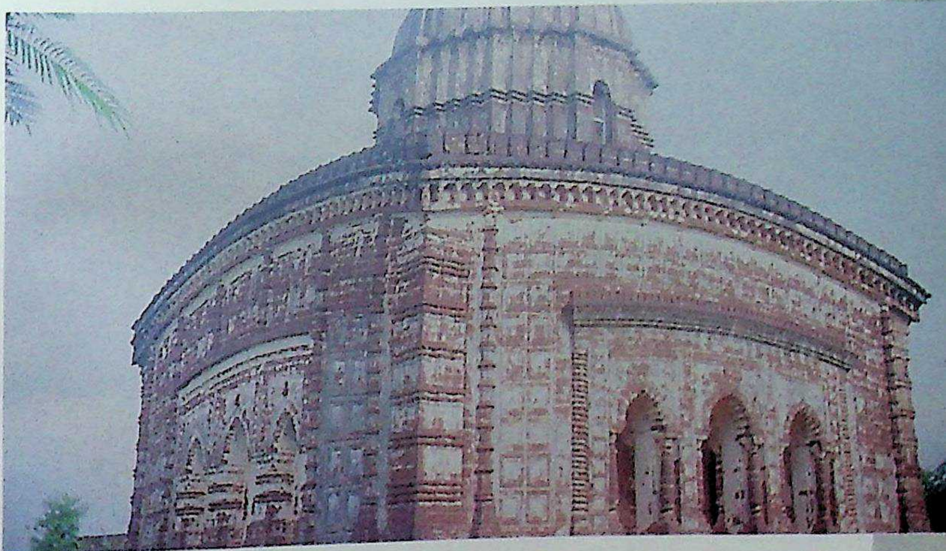
Victoria Memorial , Calcutta. Built in a time span of 158 years at a cost of Rs. 76,00,000, subscribed by the people and Princess of India.

came as naturally to the British as it did to the Moghuls. Both desired in their new settings to make self-contained enclaves free of the uncertainties of the new site—hostile natives and climate—and to build for themselves the familiar images from their own architectural histories.

The most suitable form of protection from territorial encroachment has throughout history remained the fortress; but while their Moghul predecessors relied on the natural river or hill boundaries to give it shape, the British used geometry in their brief but expressive encounter with forts. Fort William, irregular star-shaped plan rising in successive setbacks, originated from French ideas of fortifications developed by Vanban in the 17th century. Though little remains of these walls now, the fort's development as a raised and unrestricted open space at the edge of the Maidan offered the most desirable defence which seemed essential to the British, unsure of what to expect in an alien land.

The imperial rulers felt compelled to raise ceremonial edifices in commemoration of the Empire. The idea for a memorial to Queen Victoria came to Lord Curzon; that as a grand gesture of their gratitude the funds for its building should naturally be raised by the people of India. Built largely by contributions from the Indian princely states, the foundation for this monument to the Queen Empress was laid by the Prince of Wales in 1906 on the soggy Calcutta ground; its high water table and low structural stability requiring the architect to raise the building on a high plinth. William Emerson, its architect, though said to have been inspired by the Taj Mahal, created a building entirely Western in conception, plan and design. Except for the use of marble much of which was quarried from Makrana and some window details executed in filigree work, there is little resemblance between Mumtaz Mahal's tomb and Victoria's Museum.

Constructed at the edge of the Maidan the building served its original purpose: its setting and raised plinth had the desired effect of monumentality; and its crowning dome— the fifth largest at the time of building—even today, 70 years later, remains the only real marker on the city skyline.



Architecture reflects an age, an economy: Vishnupur Terracotta Temple.

The towering residential complexes.

Colonial, Moghul, princely India — the country had remained for the visitor a hybrid of architectural history. Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, touched by ancient empires, still sport the occasionally eclectic image; a weathered domed tomb, the arcade of an Imperial Commercial Centre, a commemorative arch or the crumbling edifice of a Hindu *haveli* — there still remains in the metropolitan city a hint of the country's tryst with style and tradition.

In a happy re-enactment of this past, merchants and traders — the rulers of a New India—are continuing to emulate the path of their ancestors. Architecture is the unfortunate medium for the same message; private lives are best when lived at public expense. Unearned and unaccounted wealth can wield an enormously powerful architectural expression. For the new Indian it can create the signs, the reincarnations of a new age.

The towering mansion, the slick shopping centre, flouting local building laws but clad in polished granite appears to the Oldenburg eye delightfully funny and sad and stupid and blunt and sweet when viewed across a grim neighbourhood of mud shanties. That the residents of these shanties have helped to build these buildings, and earn their livelihood by their construction, only makes the irony sadder and funnier.

Architecture reflects an age, an era, an economy, a technology, a tradition, an ideal, a way of life. And the country's public face becomes the most direct expression of all these ideas. Indian architecture reflects an age—however embarrassing a technology, however outmoded an economy, however desperate an ideal, however sectarian.

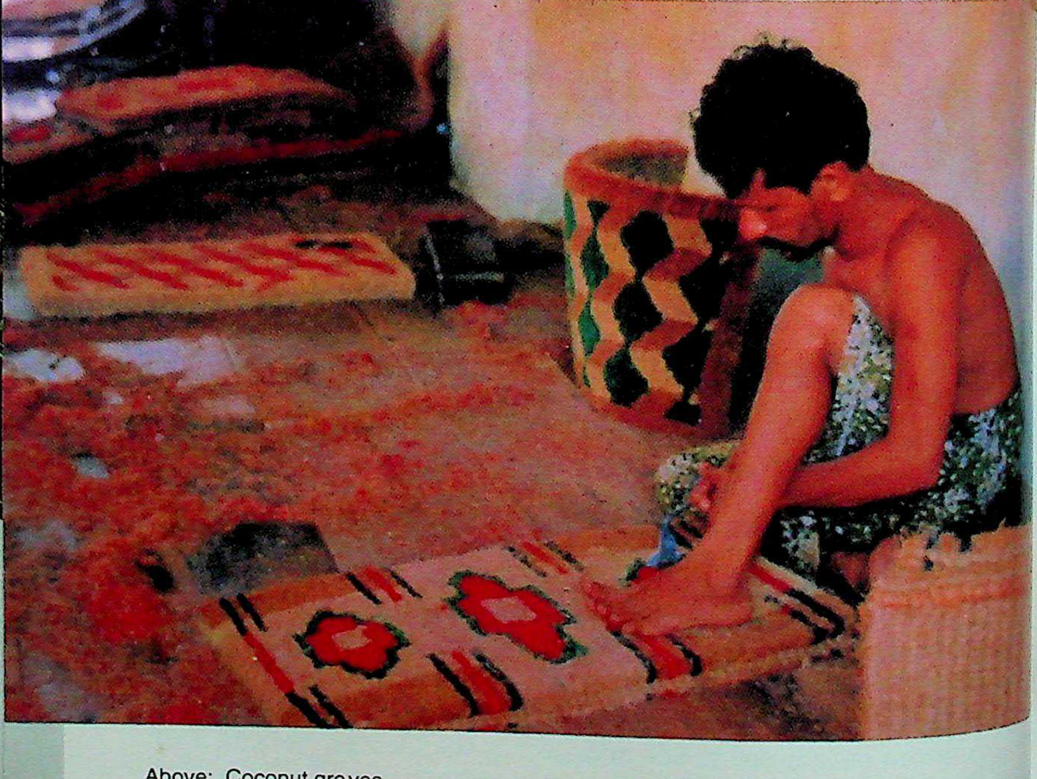
Though the country has had a long tradition of affluence, "there is great richness in India"—the new architecture shows little patience for memory, for the lessons of history. Place can be artificially created in sudden burst of narrowed signs. Active life in the old palace, the fortress and the Zenana quarters may have disappeared but the attitude of "I like it, I must have it" has created the new urban villas, the corporate offices, the commercial centre and suburban farmhouse. This is after all only a dream, the ultimate architectural fantasy.

ENVIRONMENT

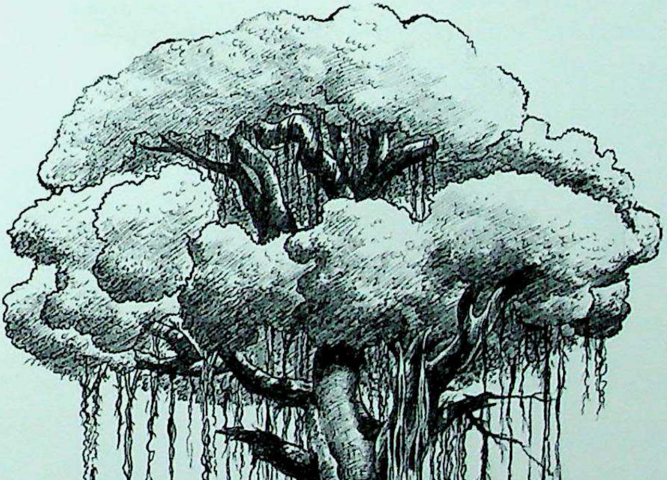
BULBUL SHARMA

BULBUL SHARMA is an artist and a writer based in Delhi. She writes in syndicated nature columns which appear in several newpapers. She also works with children in non-formal learning centres-combining nature study and art. She has been a keen bird-watcher for many years. She has written and illustrated a book on Indian birds. She is also the author of a collection of short stories called, My Sainted Aunts.

INDIA has a made-to-order range of forests and offers such a bewildering variety of landscapes that you can choose any kind you like. There are lofty snowcapped peaks in the high Himalayas with vast verdant coniferous forests nestling at their base. Beautiful unspoilt alpine glades where hundreds of rare wildflowers and plants grow are found in the remote high-altitude valleys. The western region of the Himalayas has a cold, temperate climate with heavy snowfall and not much rain. Conifers like pine, deodar, spruce, and fir grow at different heights of the mountains. There are still huge, dark forests of old deodars and pines around hill stations like Simla, Chail and Nainital and some of the trees here are as high as the hillside. Oaks, maples, and walnut trees are also seen here commonly and the ground cover of the forest is a thick carpet of ferns and wild flowers like primulas, buttercups, daisys, wild poppies, lilies and roses. The deep scarlet flowers of the Rhododendron add a splash of colour to the unbroken green landscape. But the eastern Himalayas have a much better display of these flowers since the forests here are more dense and lush. The moist, warm climate is ideally suited for orchids and ferns and many other plants. Over four hundred species of orchids are found there growing on trees and also on the ground. The deciduous forests begin to take over as you step into the area beyond the foothills. The fertile soil of the Gangetic plains allow the trees to reach great heights and there are thick forests of "Sal" along with dense bamboo groves, along with trees like Shisham, Siris and Red Silk Cotton. Mango and Jamun trees grow wild here and fruit abundantly to feed the birds and animals of the forests. The deciduous forests continue eastwards but if you travel west the scenery changes dramatically as the trees thin out. In the dry arid areas of Rajasthan only the sturdy Acacia family can survive and many varieties of the tree grow here along with thorny scrubs and cactus. The "babul." a common Acacia tree, is one of the most useful trees of the arid regions and gives fuelwood, fodder, resin, gum and 'lac' as well as 'kattha' which goes into the making of a *pan*. The Thar desert looms silently in the extreme west where there is nothing but unending stretches of sand dunes. The landscape changes back to green once more as one approaches the Deccan plateau. The dominant tree of these deciduous forests is Teak — an



Above: Coconut groves.
Below: Making full use of the tree. Weaving coir mat industry, Cochin.



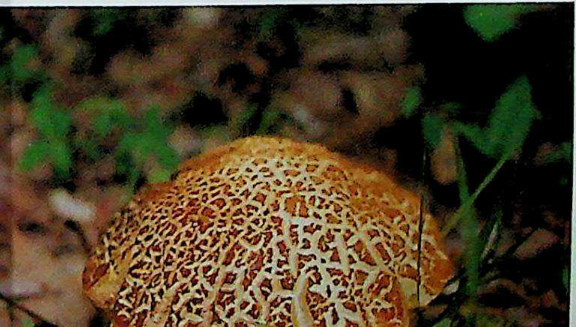
Above: Flame of the Forest; orange and red flowers ablaze in the spring.
Below: The sacred Banyan Tree.

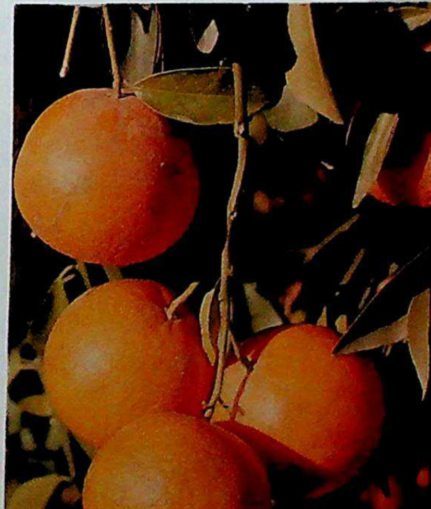
important timber tree. The Indian Rosewood, Mahogany, Neem and Tree of Heaven also grow in these lovely green-gold forests. Many common ornamental trees of the city avenues are also seen here and they are much taller than they are in their confined cement blocks along the roads. The Flame of the Forest lives up to its name and sets the forest ablaze with orange red flowers in spring. A yellow dye is made from its petals for the festival of Holi and the tree always sportingly flowers around the exact date of the celebration. The Coral too competes with equally bright red flowers and the delicate Bauhinia casts its pink and white flowers modestly on the ground. The Peepal and Banyan, which are considered sacred trees, are found here as well as in most other forests of India. They spread their branches out to cover a large area and many birds, animals and even humans live in its shade. The oldest Banyan tree stands in the Botanical Garden at Calcutta and has thousands of supporting root pillars topped by a crown of 377 metres in circumference. The vegetation of the area depends on the rainfall it receives and there may be scrub forest standing not too far from green forests. The Sandalwood tree prefers the rich soil of Karnataka and grows best here. The coconut palms are found along the coastal areas and people living along the shores make

The sacrec 'Tulsi' plant adorns the courtyards of Indian houses.

full use of this abundant tree. They drink the sweet water of the tender green coconut, the best soft drink available, eat both dried and green coconut flesh, build their huts with the large leaves, weave mats and ropes out of the dried husks. Not only that, a popular country liquor is made by tapping the juice of the coconut tree. In the lower western regions hide pockets of tropical wet evergreen forests of which very few are left not only in India but the entire world. These green, dimly lit forests have many tiers where tall trees, creepers. ferns and shrubs jostle with each other for sunlight. Many rare birds, insects and plant species are found in these rain forests and many of them are yet to be identified. As long as the battle to save and regenerate the natural cover goes on, these forests will survive and not turn into a desert.

Earth-shaking geological events that took place around 70 million years ago created the varied landscapes of the Indian subcontinent and gifted it with an incredible and rich variety of natural wealth. The Snow Leopard treads softly at one tip of the land while the Desert Fox hides from the scorching sun in another corner. Dense, wet evergreen tropical forests stand

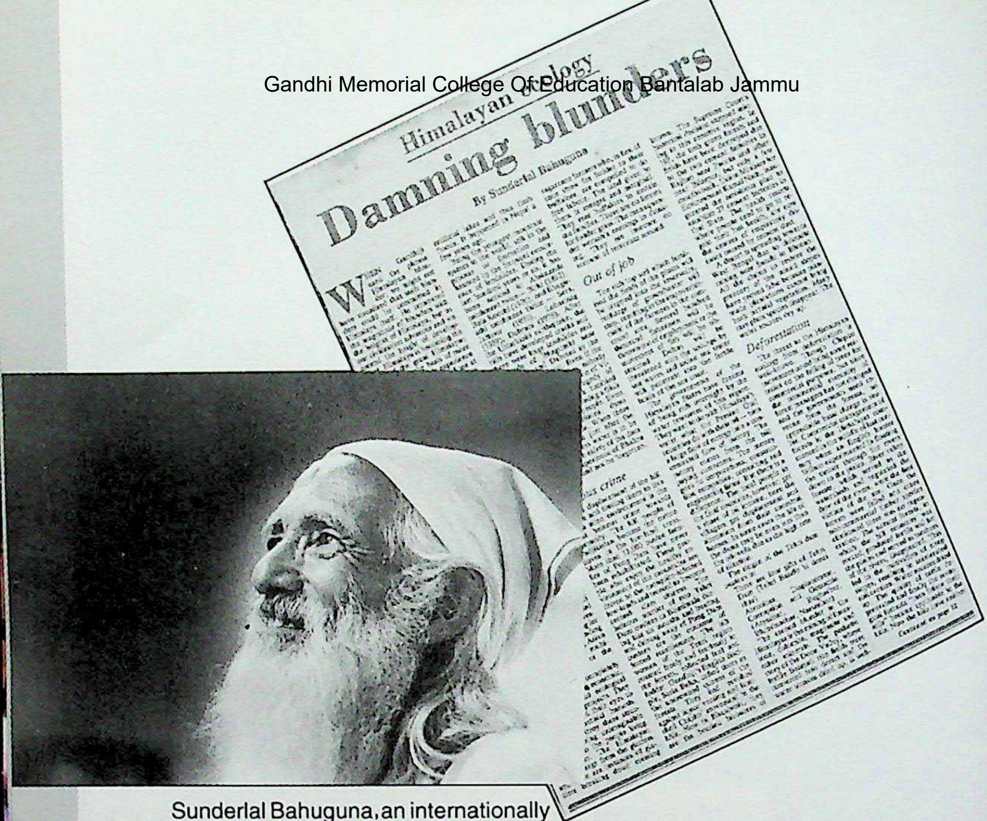




Above: Fungi of innumerable kinds play an important role in helping to break down the litter on the forest floor and return its nutrients to the soil.
Right: Orange-large,round, juicy fruits grow on a low much branched, evergreen tree.

on one side while not too far away are vast arid, rocky landscapes. In the Thar desert sand dunes stretch for miles, while thorny scrublands and deciduous forests make up the centre of the land, coastal forests, mangrove swamps and coral collections run along the sides and above them all, near the Himalayas perch alpines, meadows and dense coniferous forests. You name the landscape and India has it tucked away somewhere on its map. For hundreds of years the land and the people have existed side by side, in total harmony with no history of conflict. Indian mythology and folklore always considered nature an essential part of human survival and gave animals, plants and other non-human creatures equal, sometimes even more, importance, as man. Religious beliefs have endowed certain trees, animals and birds a sanctity that endures in villages and tribal communities even today and saves them from being destroyed. But now this happy, mutually beneficial relationship has begun to feel the strain of modern development and the link has broken down in many areas. Recent years have seen a tremendous growth in India's population and the ever-increasing demand for land has tilted the fine balance that had remained unchanged for centuries. Forests are disappearing at an alarming rate and satellite data confirms that India is losing 1.3 million hectares of forest a year while at the turn of the century India still possessed a natural forest cover of 40%. As industrial and urban markets daily swallow huge quantities of timber, it becomes more and more difficult for the village people to get wood for fuel and fodder. But, despite the bleak scenario there is still a glimmer of hope to save the remaining natural heritage. Due to the efforts of a few concerned groups, people have become aware of the ecological imbalances taking place on a large scale all over the country and realize that frequent floods, erratic rainfall patterns and soil erosion are created by senseless destruction of forests. During the last few years the problem of deforestation has received a lot of attention from the Government and many conservation projects like Social Forestry, Wasteland Development and Greening Programmes have been launched by the Ministry of Environment. But even a greater effort has been made by small local groups of ordinary citizens to stop the rapid downhill slide of deforestation and to bring it back from the

gam Digital ation



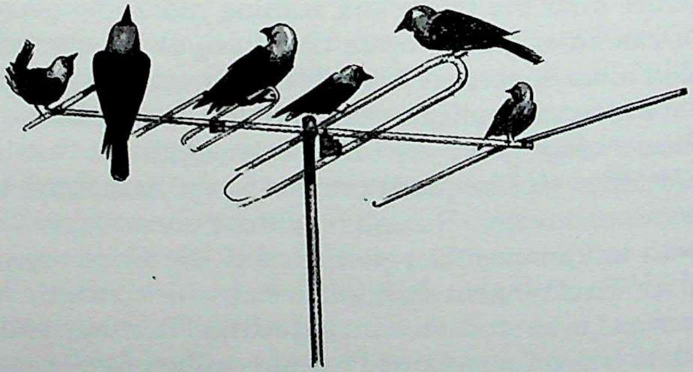
Himalayan ecology

Damming blunders

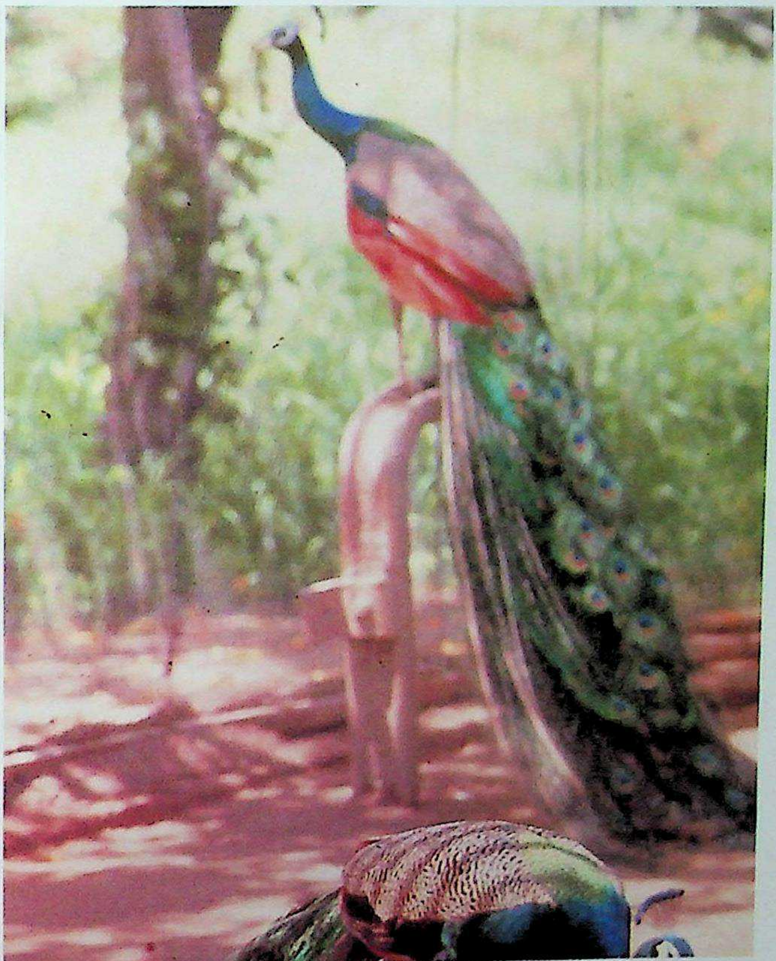
By Sunderlal Bahuguna

Sunderlal Bahuguna, an internationally known environmentalist.

brink by regenerating denuded forest land. These Non-Governmental Organisations called NGOs have been fighting a courageous battle in different parts of the country to save their natural surroundings and have often been successful despite limited funds and lack of support from the authorities. People's movements have saved the Silent Valley, one of the few surviving rain forests in India, stopped uncontrolled limestone quarrying which was destroying the verdant Doon Valley–and the women of a village in Uttar Pradesh used a unique way to protest by hugging trees. This 'Chipko' movemennt, applauded by environmentalists from all over the world, allowed the women to protect the trees in the forests from indiscriminate felling by contractors. The Ranthambhore Foundation was set up recently to resettle villages which had been displaced when the Ranthambhore National Park, a famous habitat of the tiger in Rajasthan, was formed. Kalpavriksh, a young people's body, protects the green areas of Delhi vigilantly and is now monitoring the pollution level of the city. Besides many small groups fighting bravely to save the environment from being degraded, larger organizations, like the Bombay Natural History Society and the WWF-India have been working tirelessly to study, evaluate and save the dwindling forests to protect the existing wildlife and to educate the people. The WWF- India has created a countrywide awareness of environmental problems and has actively campaigned to set up a number of wildlife sanctuaries. It has been supporting many eco-development projects and has a series of specific programmes in areas like Species Survival, Pollution and Energy Conservation, Urban Ecosystems and Environmental Legislation. But though India is trying hard to save the environment, hundreds of problems continue to exist as the population of the country rises alarmingly and resources get increasingly limited. The problems of poverty and illiteracy make environmental projects even more difficult to carry through since a hungry village will not understand or appreciate the need to save forest land or a rare wild animal. Men and nature are now at loggerheads, each trying to survive at the cost of another though belated efforts are now being made to involve the rural people when planning conservation programmes. While the village only takes fuelwood and fodder from the forest and nothing more, the overdeveloped urban areas gobble up fertile farm and forest lands as more and more houses are built to accommodate people. Cities bulge at the seams and cars multiply like rabbits as the roads of the major cities get choked with exhaust fumes. Outside the cities, factories sit like predators and spew hazardous wastes into the air and water. Though now there are stringent laws to deal with environmental pollution and the Government has passed an Environment Protection Act which awards higher penalties and even shuts down industries causing pollution, the lack of trained man-power to enforce these laws has made it toothless and ineffective. But there are successful conservation stories too which bring a ray of hope for the future. Project Tiger, launched in 1973, brought fresh ideas on conservation in India and saved not only the tiger but huge areas of its wild habitat. As a result a number of other animals and plant species got a new lease of life too. As its home was protected and allowed to regenerate, the tiger flourished and from a dwindling population of 2,000, it sprang back to 4,000 in 1988. The government now plans to start Project Elephant to restore the lost and degraded habitat of elephants and create corridors for their migration. Several other projects to save endangered species like the Musk Deer, One-horned Rhino and the Great Indian Bustard have been started. Poaching in protected wildlife areas has been reduced though there are still many cases of animals being killed or captured by poachers. The existing Wildlife Protection Act is to be made even more strict to stop illegal trade in animals and to control poaching. Handicapped by limited funds and innumerable other pressing problems, India is still trying to save its environment and restore the balance between man and nature that existed not so long ago.



BIRDS

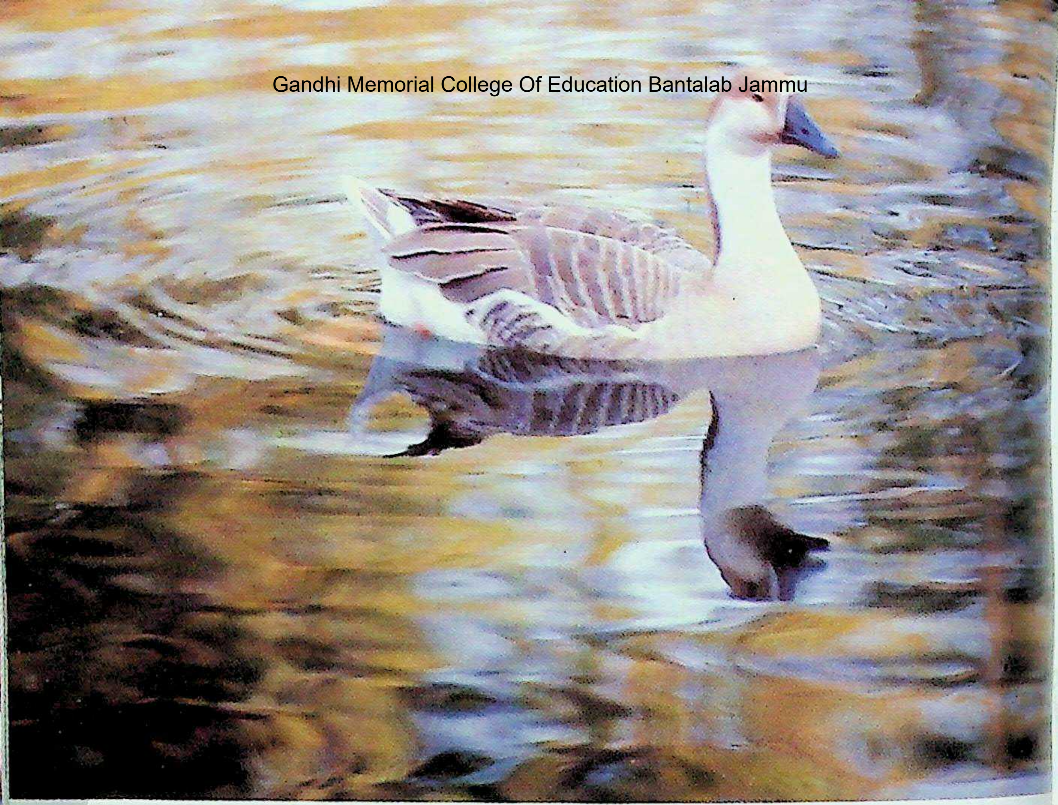


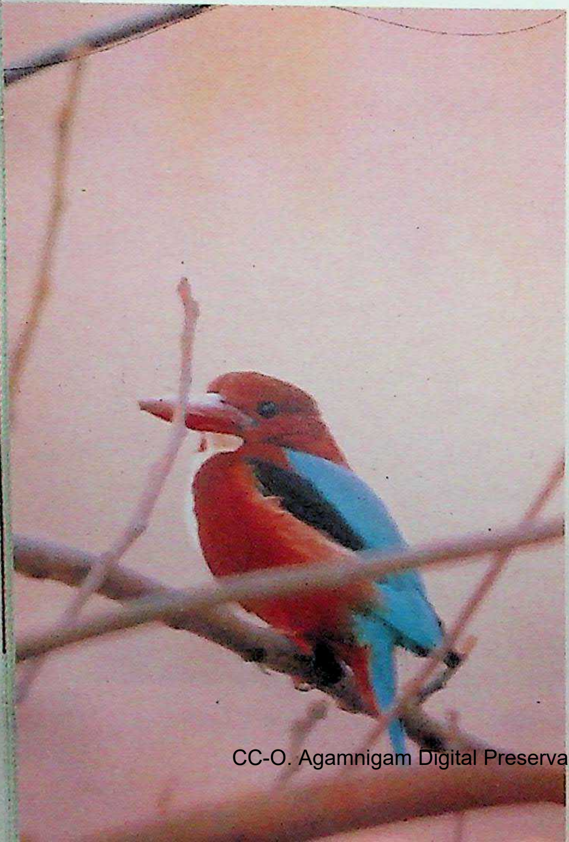
Peacock, the national bird of India.

INDIA has the honour of being host to 1,200 species of birds out of a total number of 8,600 that live in the world. The great diversity of its physical features, climate and vegetation gives a permanent residence to 900 species and lures 300 migratory birds to its fertile grounds during winter. The

Pigeons in India are found in great numbers in cities.

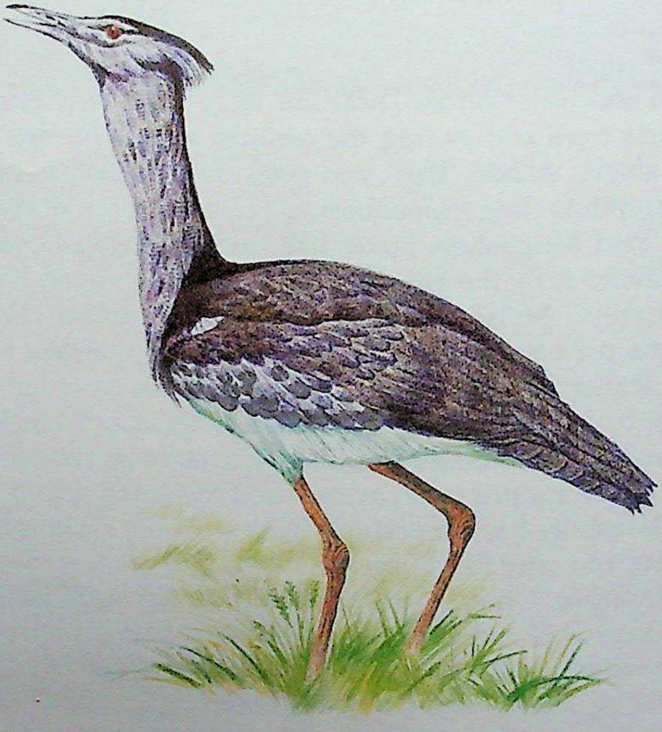
birdwatcher has an easy time in India and does not have to make any extra efforts to spot birds. Even crowded metropolitan cities like Delhi and Bombay have many species bravely fighting to share the limited open areas. Delhi, with its large gardens, shaded avenues and parks, heads the list of good city bird habitat and in one day you can see at least twenty or more birds of common species. Bombay, despite its high-rise buildings, has areas of green, like the Borival National Park, where many birds escape to find shelter. Wherever you are, common birds like Magpie, Robins, Bulbuls, Sunbirds, Indian Robins, Mynas and Hoopoes will probably be the first ones to greet you. In Delhi there are many woodland birds living in gardens of residential areas and it is not unusual to find Golden Orioles flying across the street, or the Grey Hornbills hammering on the trees that line the city roads. There are Treepies gracefully swinging on the branches and Green Beeaters hunting above the treetops. Dumpy little Coppersmiths call out in metallic notes all day to compete with the shrill but musical call of the Koel. Spotted Owlets peer at you from dark, hidden hollows while Small Blue Kingfishers fly in to search for insects and tadpoles near drains and water taps. The dry, scrubland areas and cultivated fields outside the city belong to Skylarks and Pied Rush Chats. They share the large open spaces where





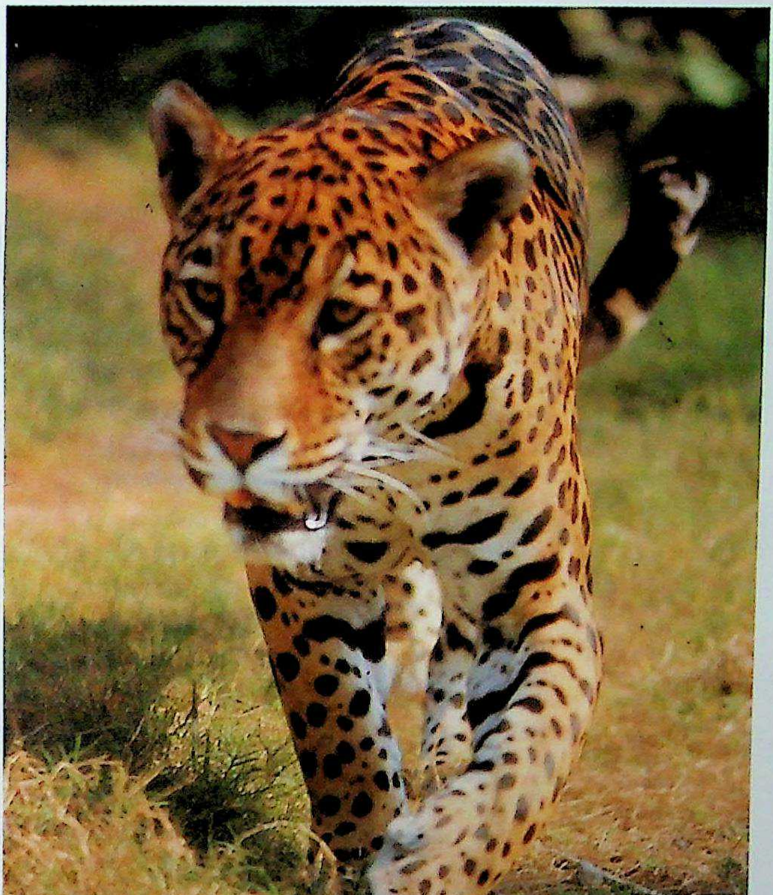
Above: A Duck.
Left: A white-breasted Kingfisher.

mustard and wheat grow, with other woodland birds like the Indian Roller, Black Drongo, Blackwinged Kite and the White-breasted Kingfisher. In winter there are large groups of glossy Starlings gleaning seeds on the fields along with the pretty Peacock and his drab wives. You will hear the Brown Doves cooing here gently and the Pied Crested too calls here at the end of summer to herald the rains. This black and white monsoon bird can be seen in the city too but sings much louder in the open fields. Just on the edge of the city, near the river Jamuna, are marshy pockets where water birds live and hunt. Blackwinged Stilts march busily in the shallow pools, egrets and paddy birds look for aquatic insects while jacanas and water hens balance on the water hyacinths. Redwattled Lapwings strut up and down looking like VIPs and ignore the cheerful, friendly chatter of the Baya Weavers. If you want to extend your checklist of birds then all you have to do is travel to a sanctuary or forest. The Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur is one of the best bird sanctuaries in India, with an astounding variety of woodland and water birds. There are large lakes here studded with Acacia trees and during the nesting season in monsoon, on one single Acacia tree you will find Painted Storks, Openbills, White Ibis, Spoonbills, Cormorants and Herons. Beautiful Pied Kingfishers hover like tiny helicopters over the lake and above it fly the gang of predators. Sharp-eyed Fishing Eagles, Ospreys, Marsh Harriers and Kestrals spend the day chasing the poor water birds from one end of the lake to the other. In winter the lakes of Bharatpur become crowded with migratory birds that fly in from colder regions to seek the warmth and better feeding conditions. The endangered Siberian Crane is in Bharatpur every winter and the small group of 25 to 30 birds usually has a few chicks with it. These rare birds are fussy eaters and only like to eat the tubers of a plant that grows just in Bharatpur. Other migratory birds are not so finicky and eat every vegetable and animal matter they can find in the lake. The Bar-headed and Greying Geese do not mind attacking the crops growing nearby and the various migratory ducks like the Pintail, Brahminy, Mallard and Gadwall swim around the lake searching tirelessly for food. The birds of the Himalayan forests too constantly fly up and down the hillsides looking for fruits, flowers and insects of any kind. The tall conifers, the wild flowers and ferns growing in their shade offer a safe hiding place for the shy pheasants but the Scarlet and Gold Finches, nutthaches, treecreepers, buntings, and Cinnamon Sparrows do not mind hunting in the open. The Whistling Thrush and the White Cheeked Bulbul are two most common birds of the hillsides and will sing happily for you any time. The Golden Eagle, a majestic, aloof bird stays far away from the crowds and soars above the peaks. Though many birds like the Great Indian Bustard and Jerdon's Courser are on the endangered list, while the Pinkheaded Duck and Mountain Quail have vanished forever, India still remains a rich and abundant bird paradise.



The Great Indian Bustard.

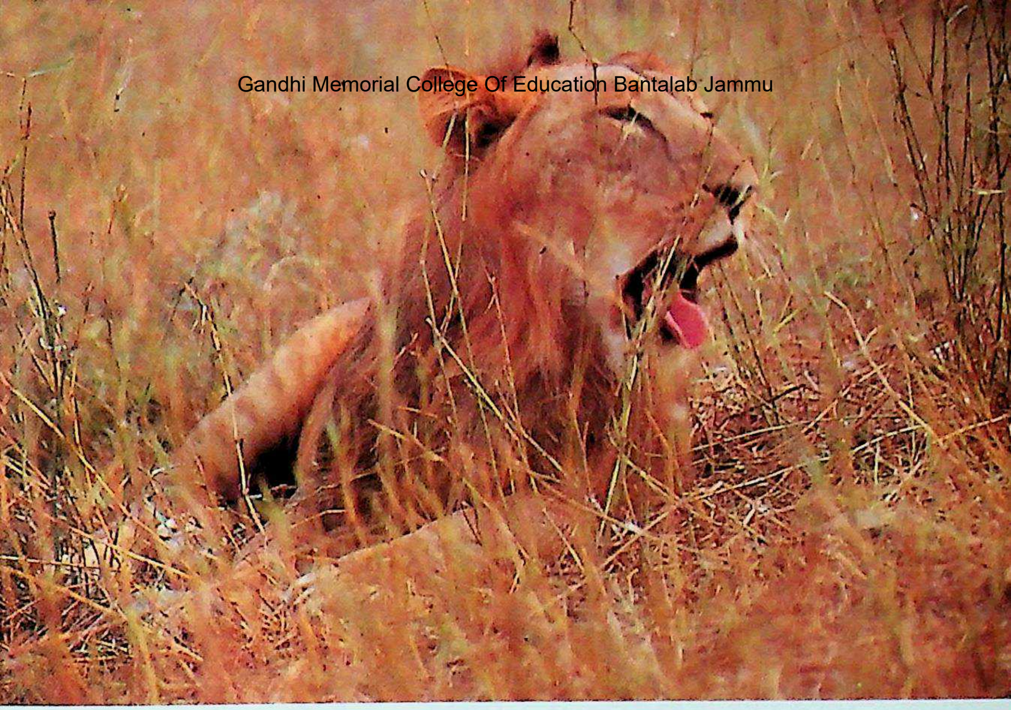
ANIMALS

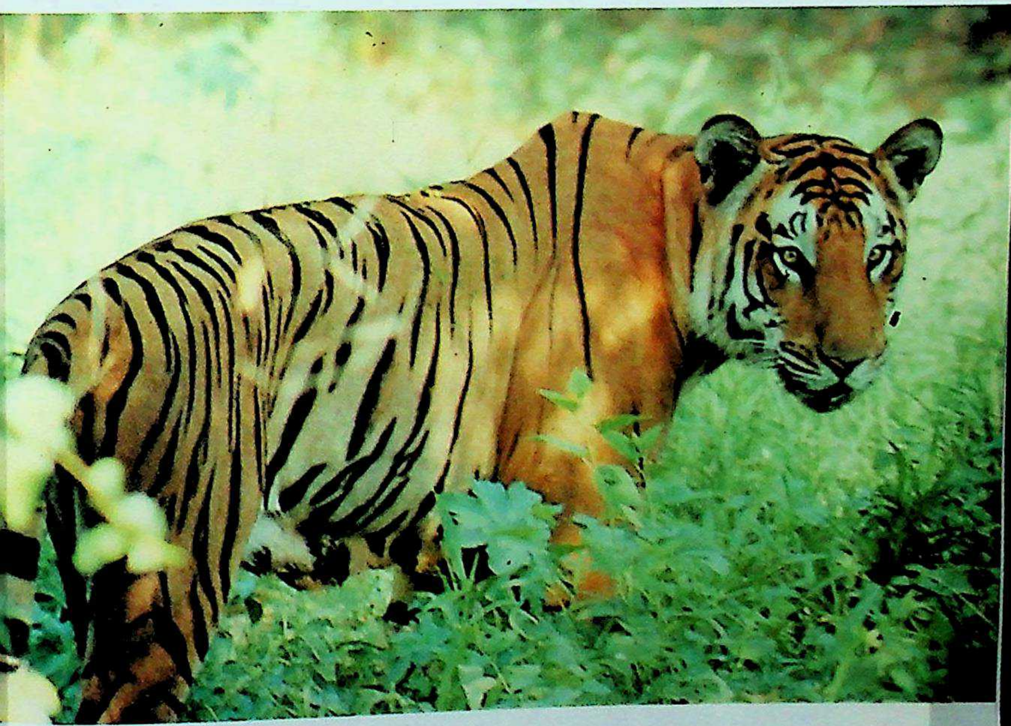


A Leopard.

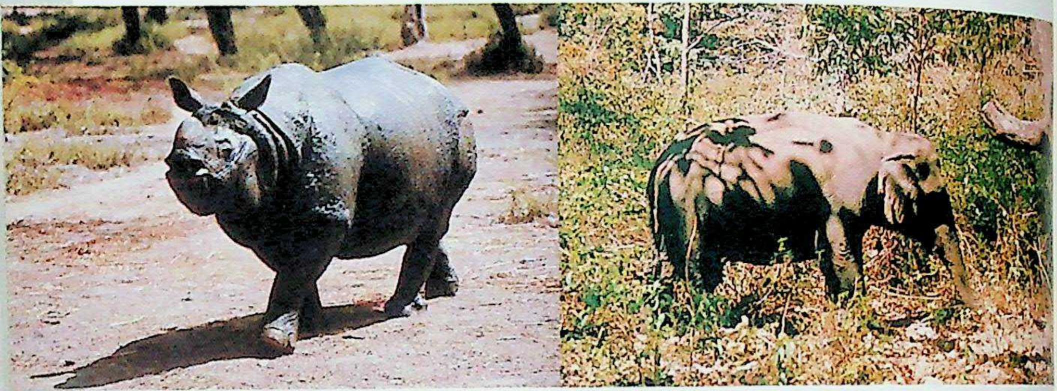
THOUGH India has an impressive array of animals, reptiles and insects living in various parts of the country, it is not easy to see them unless one ventures into the special habitat that gives shelter to each one of them. The many wildlife sanctuaries and national parks are a good place to encounter many of them in one place. There are 70 national parks and 411 sanctuaries dotted all over the country. The first one and also one of the best is the Corbett National Park situated in the foothills of the Himalayas in Uttar Pradesh. This 'terai' region with its rich and abundant forests and grassy meadows used to be the favourite tiger shooting spot of Maharajas and every Viceroy considered it a part of his duties to bag a tiger here. But saner voices and early conservationists put an end to this cruel sport and in 1936 India's first national park was established here. Later named after the famous hunter-turned-conservationist Jim Corbett, this park has a varied terrain which goes from hilly areas to ravines to deciduous forests to riverine tracts. Tigers lurk in the vast fields of grass and wild elephants slowly walk along the river, throwing water over their backs. Further down long-snouted Gharials doze in the sunshine. These dangerous-looking reptiles eat only fish and nothing bigger. Large herds of chital, one of the most beautiful deer seen in India, roam the fields, looking out nervously for the tigers. The Barking Deer can only be heard and not seen but the Wild Boar is always out eating in the open. Leopards hide in the hilly areas, and the Sloth Bear ambles around looking for the nectar-filled flowers of the Mahuwa tree. The Ranthambhore National Park is another fine park and the tiger is so happy here that it

The White Tigers of Rewa are world famous.





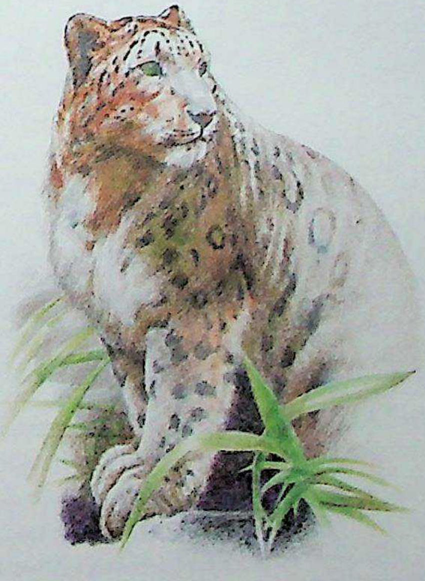
Above: Asiatic Lion lives in small family cluster amongst the deciduous forests, trees and shrubs of Gir. Below: Full-grown Bengal Tiger.



Left: The Great One-horned Rhinoceros lives in the tall grasslands of Bengal, Assam.
Right: Indian Elephant, renowned as a working animal, also used for ceremonial parades.

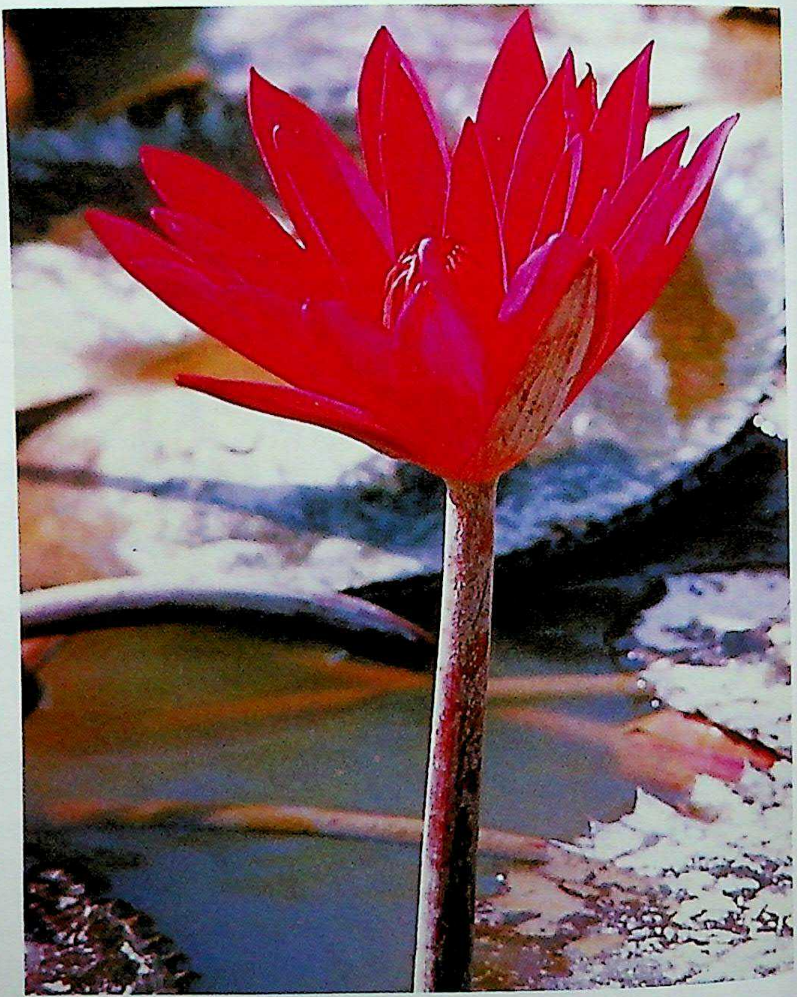
has increased its population many times over. The sprawling park is over 158 sq miles large and has rugged terrain. The tiger roams here in broad daylight but one cannot see it unless it wants to grant an audience since the rolling, golden meadows of grass and thick forest give it many wonderful hiding places. Evil-eyed Marsh Crocodiles swim in the many lakes that dot the park and peer out incongruously from under pink waterlilies. The rocky, scrub forest areas and old monuments of the park shelter hyenas, jackals and jungle cats while the silvery fields of grass are the running tracks of Sambar, Chital and Nilgai. The elegant Indian Gazelle stand shyly in shadows of the Acacia trees and step out into the open only when it is all clear. In the north-east, the Kaziranga is the home of the One-horned Rhinoceros. This prehistoric-looking animal roams around in battle dress chewing endlessly on green shoots or wallowing in muddy swamps. While Kaziranga with its huge fields of elephant grass, swamps and evergreen forests is the perfect habitat for the Rhino, the Gir National Park in Gujarat is the last refuge and only habitat of the Asiatic Lion. This majestic cat was once found abundantly all over India but relentless hunting has reduced its population and almost wiped the animal out. Now the surviving 200-odd Asiatic Lions live a protected life in the forests of Gir. Each sanctuary in India has its celebrity animals in residence and the protection given to these animals saves hundreds of other creatures and the entire ecosystem benefits. The Lion-tailed Macaque, the Nilgiri Langur and the elusive

Nilgiri Thar are found in the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala while the Hoolock Gibbon and Slow Loris stay well hidden in the forests of Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam. The Kashimir Stag, a rare red deer, lives in Dachigam in Kashmir and leaves the high mountain peaks for the Snow Leopard. The Desert Fox hunts in the sand dunes while the Blackbucks race each other in the arid areas of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Far away in Orissa, huge armies of the Olive Ridley turtles emerge from the sea and lay thousands of eggs on the beaches. The Indian Wolf howls in the remote lonely deserts and mountains and the Indian Pangolin curls up to ward off enemies but the Indian Python just swallows what comes its way. The list of fascinating animals of India is endless and each one of them is there in their safe habitat, waiting patiently for prey and maybe a few well-behaved admirers.



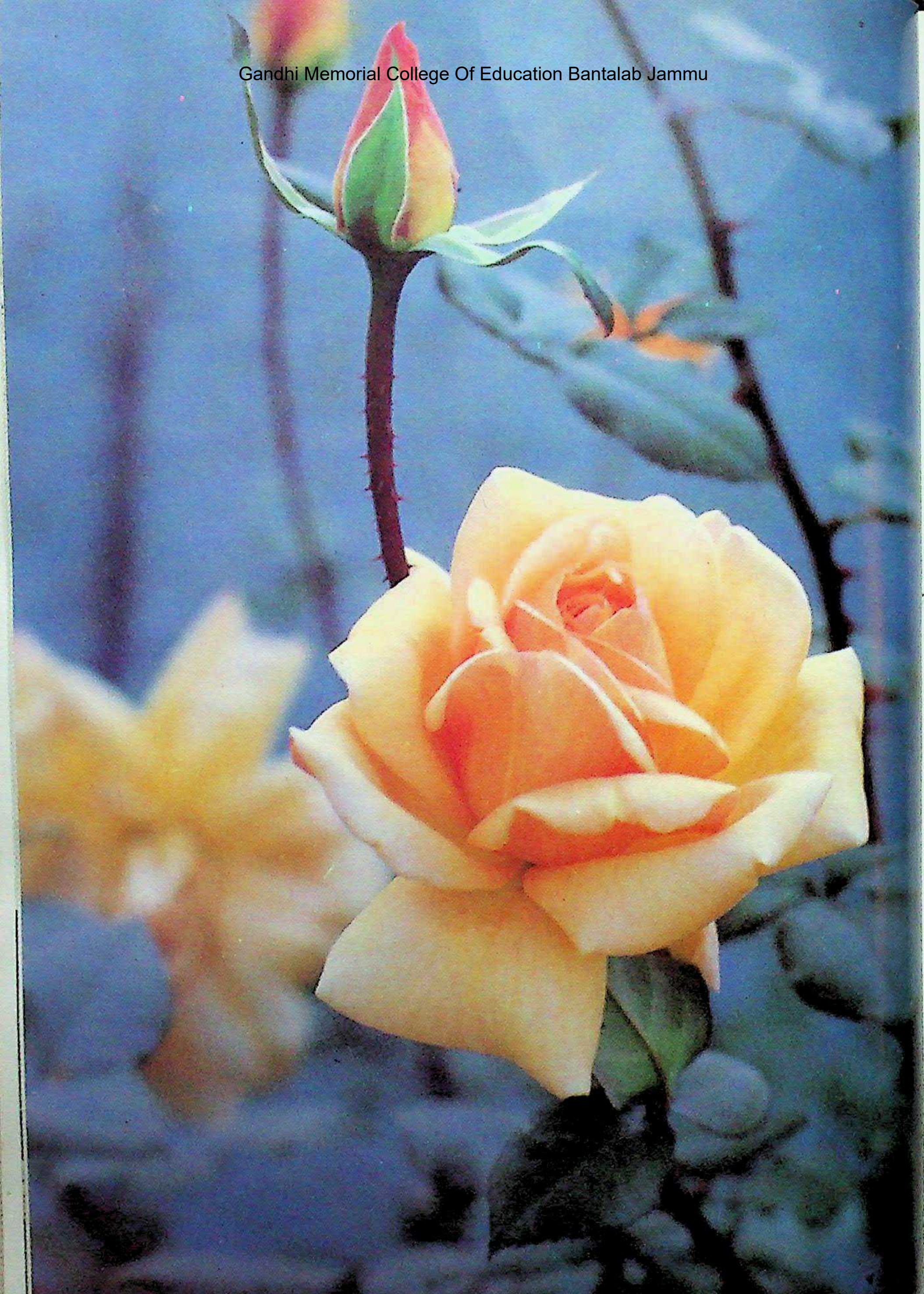
A Snow Leopard.

FLOWERS



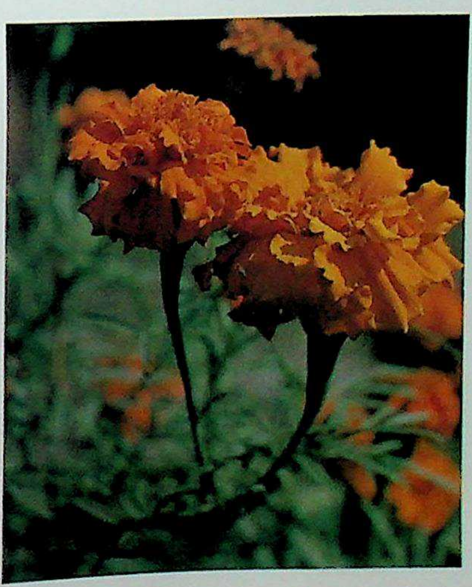
Lotus - the National flower of India.

In India, there is no marked season of spring, sending signals to the flowers to bloom. You will find shrubs, creepers, wild plants and trees covered with blossoms at any time of the year. Winter brings out a grand display of English annuals in northern India and Delhi turns into a spectacular flower show with an array of Flox, Sweetpeas, Calendulas, Stock, Lupins, Sweet Williams, Cinararias, and Petunias. But there are many other flowers which grow all round the year and each of them has a special role to play in Indian homes. The beautiful Lotus has been treated with great respect from ancient times and has acquired a high status in literature and art. It is associated with many Hindu gods and goddesses too and represents the universe in mythology. But the flower has more earthly uses too; the stem, roots and seeds can be made into delicious curry. The Marigold, a humble, common flower which grows in villages all over India is also used in religious ceremonies,and garlands of these rust and gold flowers are exchanged by the bride and the bridegroom at traditional weddings. The petals of the flower are pressed to make marigold oil and also used to add flavour to pan masala. The Indian Rose has a heady perfume too though it may not look as beautiful and showy as its hybrid cousins. The petals are used to decorate sweet dishes and rose water is sprinkled over almost everything edible. It is also sprinkled on people to welcome them at weddings. During summer evenings the flowers of the Queen of the Night, Jasmine and Mogra fills the air with their strong perfume. Women wear garlands of these delicate white flowers in their hair. The flashy, crimson red flowers of the Hibiscus is a favourite of sunbirds and bees who hover around it to sip the nectar. There are many shades of Hibiscus but only the red flower is used in religious ceremonies. The leaves of this flower are used to cure many ailments. The Harsingar flowers at the onset of winter and its delicate fragrance announces that summer is over at last. The tree does not grow very tall and begins to flower very quickly. But the tiny orange-stemmed white blossoms appear only at night and legend says that the tree had once offended the sun-god and that is why the flowers are not allowed to face its rays.These fragrant flowers are used to flavour and decorate 'pulaos'. The Morning Glory closes its flowers when the sunlight is too bright but opens them at once if the sky turns cloudy. This fast-growing creeper is also called the Railway creeper since it often covers fences along the stations. The bright yellow blossoms of the Trumpet Flower do not mind the sunlight and in fact look their best at high noon. These shrubs are found in cities all over India and they spread easily during the monsoon. The Passion



The Indian Rose.

Flower is more particular and grows only in good soil. This beautiful creeper has large cup-shaped purple flowers and many legends are attached to it. The five stamens and numerous filaments that form a fringe in the centre of the flowers, represent 'Kaurav and Pandav', the villains and heroes respectively from the epic *Mahabharat*. The flower is also called 'Krishna chura' — Krishna's crown—while in Spain it is known as the Flower of Crucifixion as it bears the five wounds of Christ. The Bougainvillaea grows commonly in every area, however poor the soil may be, but the Poincettias prefer well-watered gardens or lush forests. The mountain regions have a totally different range of flowers and so do the tropical forests of eastern India. In western Himalayas wild flowers like Gentians, Buttercups, Lily of the Valley, Primroses, Primulas, Daisys, Violets and Wild Roses grow amongst the fern-covered hillsides. The warm, rain-drenched forests of the eastern region are full of rare Orchids, fragrant Magnolias and many shades of Rhododendrons. The Champa tree is always found near temples and its creamy, yellow flowers are used in religious ceremonies. A pink variety known as the Frangipani is also a very popular garden tree since it can be grown easily from a



The common Marigold flower that grows all over India.

Above : A cluster of flowers.
Below : A Tiger butterfly,"Danausgenetia" amidst flowers.

Left : A fully blossomed Dahlia.
Right: The commonly grown Bougainvillaea.

stem cutting. The Chandnee or Moonbeam is grown in many gardens too and it's pretty, white flowers last all through summer and the rainy season. Then there are flowering creepers like the delicate Wisteria, the flashy pink Rangoon creeper and the lovely Coral Creeper, adding to the colourful, never-ending parade of flowers.

THE INDIAN PRESS

BIDYUT SARKAR

BIDYUT SARKAR has been a Fulbright scholar, UNESCO *editor and official of the Indian delegation to the United Nations, New York. Later, he held senior editorial positions in The Economic Times, India's leading business newspaper. In recent years, he has been active in journalism training, research and professional development. He was founder-director of the Living Media Research Foundation and is presently associated with The Times of India group.*

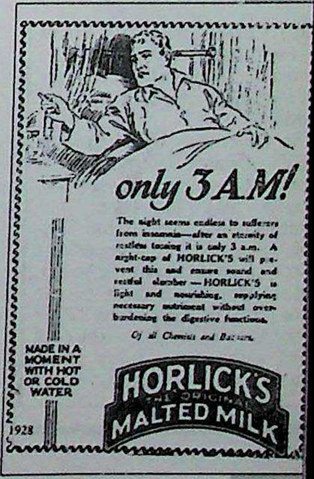
No visitor to India is likely to pick up any of its newspapers without a feeling of curiosity even before he gets to the headlines. Which to read for one thing? There is one that proclaims itself below the masthead: India's National Newspaper, and another that declares itself on the top of the mast: India's Only National Newspaper.

What is the difference, one might ask. Such questions have within them the key to understanding the Indian press — its historical origin, geographical spread, the multiplicity of languages in which it makes its appearance, and the peculiarities of its content and style.

Newspapers in India are essentially an outgrowth of British rule over the subcontinent. Trade followed the flag, and then came the treadle machine to print the journal that would carry the message of the ruling class, even as it was divided among the civil and military services, the mercantile interests and a smaller area of missionary enterprise such as Annie Besant's *New India.* Each group had its favoured organ.

Some of the newspapers brought out under the old dispensation are still around in independent India, venerable of age but pulsating with vigour in the new democratic set-up. *The Times of India*, now expanded from its original base in Bombay to the national capital and four other state capitals and claiming to be the country's largest English daily; *The Statesman*, which anticipated the changing order with simultaneous editions published from the old and new capital, Calcutta and Delhi, for over 60 years; and *The Pioneer*, the latest arrival from its erstwhile foothold in Uttar Pradesh; these are among the relics of the press honoured widely — and particularly by themselves.

The Statesman proudly announces above its leading article every day that it is directly descended from *The Friend of India* - founded 1818. *The Pioneer* swears by every word written by Rudyard Kipling, its assistant editor once upon a time, repeating it all serially. *The Times*


only 3 A.M!

The night seems endless to sufferers from insomnia—after an eternity of restless tossing it is only 3 a.m. A night-cap of HORLICK'S will prevent this and ensure sound and restful slumber — HORLICK'S is light and nourishing, supplying necessary nutriment without overburdening the digestive functions.

Of all Chemists and Bazaars.

MADE IN A MOMENT WITH HOT OR COLD WATER

HORLICK'S THE ORIGINAL MALTED MILK

1928

From the Times archives.

of India displays on its editorial page ads harking back to the past when the goods were almost always imported brands, much coveted by today's consumers.

The 'national newspaper' concept developed out of a belief that the British Owned Indian Press (BOIP) could not represent the political aspirations and economic interests of the people of country. In order to spread a sense of national consciousness and at the same time carry on a dialogue with the rulers, a number of newspapers were brought out in English — first from the presidency cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, then gradually extending to the hinterland. These were closely allied to particular politicians and parties, while serving the larger cause.

The official history of *The Hindu*, one of these newspapers, bears the sub-title, The Epic Story of Indian Nationalism, which also serves to explain the image it has of itself as India's national newspaper. From its original base in Madras, it has gradually moved north to launch an edition in Delhi. But several other papers played a parallel role during the Independence movement. Some have fallen by the wayside —

BLITZ
MONEYTECH
PREMIUM
Dalal Street
MAIL
MONEY

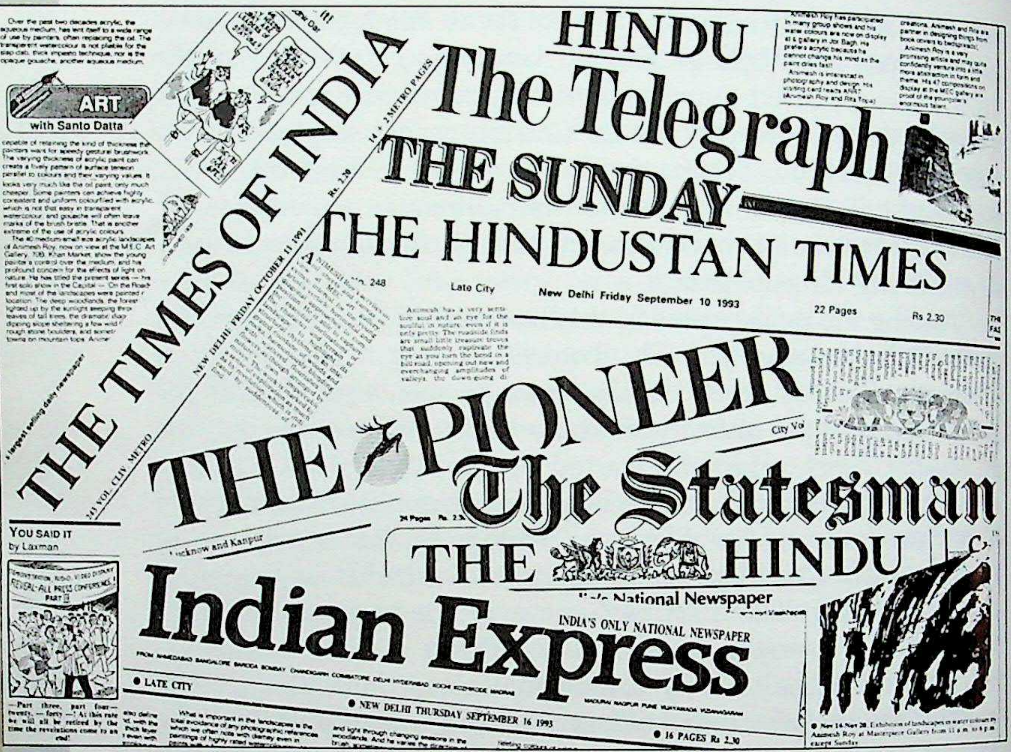
Newspaper and magazine vendor on the streets of Delhi.

notably, and most recently, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, which overnight turned itself into an English language journal to beat the 1878 Press Gag Act directed at 'vernacular' newspapers. The Calcutta daily, however, could find no magic way out of the financial squeeze it was to face in the early 1990s. Like Lenin, who had hailed it in 1920 as the best nationalist paper in India, it was overtaken by market forces, though there was some talk of resuming its publication.

Among the newspapers in this line of descent which are still flourishing we may list: *The Tribune*, finding a new home in Chandigarh away from Lahore, now on the other side of the Indian border, the only major daily to be managed by a trust; *Hindustan Times*, originally started by the Akali Sikhs but now one of the leading mainstream newspapers published from Delhi and Patna; and *Indian Express*, which publishes a total of 16 editions from Chandigarh in the north to Cochin in the south and in states as far apart as Gujarat in the west and Andhra Pradesh in the east.

It is this cross-country spread that gives the *Indian Express* a claim to call itself India's Only National Newspaper. But the formula is in truth a verbal charm that attracts most papers, whether they advertise it or not. Newspapers in India have usually sought the aura surrounding a national institution without getting bogged down in any local identification.

Thus their titles do not bear the name of a city signifying the close emotional association with their own special domain as newspapers in countries of great size such as the United States, Canada or Australia tend to do. There is no counterpart of titles such as *The New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, Montreal Gazette, Sydney Morning Herald*, and so on. Indian newspapers prefer to go for titles comprehensive enough in scope to speak as the representative of the entire country, region, or a whole way of life *(The Times of India, Deccan Herald, The Hindu)*, or underline a self-perceived constituency-neutral role for themselves *(Patriot, The Pioneer, The Statesman)*. Some of the early experiments of a city-based title were abandoned sooner or later. *Bombay Times* long ago gave way to *The Times of India*, and *Madras Mail* shed the first part of its title but could not last out. Bombay at one time had the *Chronicle* as Madras had the *Times* while *New Delhi Times* was only the fictional title of a Hindi movie.


ART
with Santo Datta
THE TIMES OF INDIA
HINDU
The Telegraph
THE SUNDAY
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
Late City
New Delhi Friday September 10 1993
22 Pages
Rs 2.30
THE PIONEER
The Statesman
THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper
YOU SAID IT
by Laxman
Indian Express
INDIA'S ONLY NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
LATE CITY
NEW DELHI THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 16 1993
16 PAGES Rs 2.30

Mastheads of various English dailies.

In yet another respect, English-language newspapers like to think of themselves as the national press. No newspaper published in any of the Indian languages and dialects — at last count there were 93 — has the country-wide reach or impact of the former category, as its circulation is basically limited to a tract, a state or a region at most. Newspapers in Hindi, the official language that is common to several northern states, constitute the largest group with about 30 per cent of the total circulation of all dailies. English language newspapers, with 20 per cent share, hold the second position. All the remaining Indian languages account for the other half. However, in respect of individual titles, the sales figures of some of the regional newspapers published in Bengali, the language of West Bengal, and Malayalam, the language of Kerala, are much higher than those of their counterparts in English. But their catchment does not extend outside of a particular language community into the all-India arena.

History and geography have both left their mark on the Indian press. The partisan debates of the past show a pattern of continuity in the overdose of political issues in today's newspapers. The wide canvas of geography, which left a subcontinental country like India without newspapers functioning at the local level but seeking to influence only centres of political leadership, has resulted in a lopsidedness of reporting.

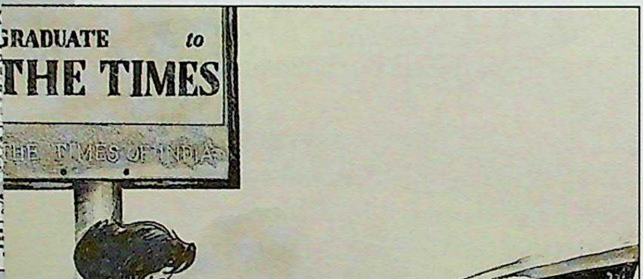
V. S. Naipaul, a penetrating observer, noted some 15 years back, while revisiting his ancestral homeland, that the Indian press "has not sought to put India in touch with itself, it does not really know how and it has not felt the need." He cited a newspaper report under the headline WOMAN JUMPS TO DEATH: *A woman jumped to death, recently, after throwing her two children into a well 60 km from Bangalore, according to police.* Naipaul reacted: "Recently! But that is all. No reporter was sent out to get the story."

The tradition that what was happening in the backyard was not as important as a grandstand editorial view of the centre stage of India and the world had long shaped the priorities of the press. But these were changing as a backlash to the censorship imposed during Mrs Indira Gandhi's Emergency rule (1975-1977).

Ironically, Mrs Gandhi's government had urged newspapers to do more of development reporting as a diversion from their political obsessions. After the state of Emergency was lifted, a gutsy new journalism began to take on social issues in a big way, which helped daily newspaper circulation move up 65 per cent between 1976 and 1981; the gain had been a mere 2.5 per cent during the previous five-year period. Excesses of the police, evil practices of burning the bride because she did not bring enough dowry or of coercing a wife to join her husband on the funeral pyre and thus become a *sati*, misdeeds of the corrupt politicians and ministers and their partners in bribery, fraud and scam, and so on, have become staples of investigative journalism in recent years.

It was James Cameron, an eminent British journalist of recent vintage, who had complained how difficult it was to find out what was going on anywhere if one depended on an Indian newspaper. Cameron was by no means unsympathetic to India and indeed had declared his long emotional involvement with it. "When the Indian press was not boring it was exasperating, a processing plant for government handouts," Cameron remarked.

The habit of publishing government handouts without scrutiny was handed down by the BOIP, while the nationalist press overdid the job of carrying the speeches of its political allies at full length. In fact, some leaders would often communicate their speeches in advance to friendly newspapers, which even extended to them the facility of sending collect telegrams as if they were regular correspondents. The practice of keeping politicians and other eminent persons on a retainer basis for first-information reports on news developments concerning them is known to exist in some groups even now.



But much has changed over the last decade or so. Investigative journalism, human interest features, the urge to fan out on the hunt for a big story in rural areas, where massacres still take place, whether at the hands of terrorists/militants or in internecine feuds, the desire to dig hard into the surface value of government documents are some noticeable characteristics of the press of late. However, there is still a lack of backgrounding that would help the reader who has not followed the story from day to day to understand the circumstances and events preceding it.

The changing mind and heart of Indian journalism has been accompanied by growth in physical terms. Readership of newspapers published in the regional languages has been rising as literacy increases in the mother tongue to begin with. But the overall ratio of 26 copies per 1,000 population still falls short of the norms set by UNESCO. With progressive development of the economy, and the newspaper industry's own expansion into new areas of publication, this is expected to get better.

Technology has made possible a widespread network of simultaneous editions. In Andhra Pradesh, *Eenadu* publishes Telugu language editions in every district of the sprawling state. Many other newspapers have multiple editions published within their linguistic state, but as mentioned above only the English-language newspaper enjoys the nationwide market to find it worthwhile to go outside the borders of its home base.

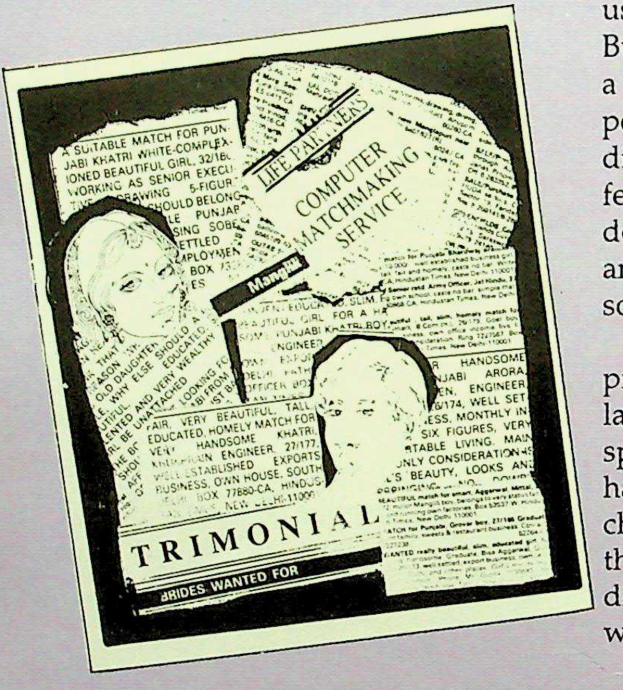
Along with new technology a new spirit of enterprise has entered the newspaper business. Weekend papers, financial papers, and a wide range of magazines are more recent additions to the portfolios of both established and up-and-coming publishing houses. Money made in other industries has facilitated takeovers as well as fresh launches. Peddling information and moulding opinion are profitable as well as prestigious activities, as elsewhere in the world.

In India, the absence of any real competition from TV and radio, which are government-controlled and thus unable to deliver either the plurality or the credibility of the print media, make the publishing business even more attractive. While the generation of post-independence newspapers such as *Deccan Herald* of Bangalore and *Newstime* of Hyderabad have proved themselves as among the best provincial dailies out of the infusion of non-newspaper money, *The Telegraph* of Calcutta was a successful extension of the eminent position already attained by its elder, the Bengali newspaper, *Ananda Bazar Patrika,* in a traditional newspaper city. But, it must be added, some of the major newspaper ventures by newcomers in the business have also turned into big failures.

Journalists have never had it so good, with higher pay packets and bigger bylines, a change from the relative penury and anonymity of the past; newspapers now attract a breed of better educated and worldly-wise staff. Readers have a greater variety of newspapers and reading fare to choose from. The papers look more handsome than ever before with their computerized design and up-to-date production methods. It is only in the writing that one sees the difference and a quality of quaintness.

STYLE AND ODDITIES

A READER of an Indian newsweekly, which had given away as promotional boost a copy of an Australian magazine tucked inside, posed a question to the editor: "How is it that in a country where English is the national language a magazine uses such simple language? But in India where English is a 'foreign' tongue, newspapers and magazines use very difficult English." The difference, perhaps, is between doing what comes naturally and savouring something not so familiar.



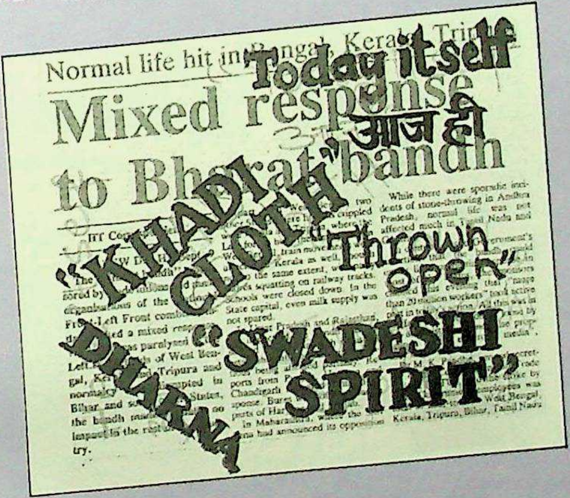
The English language press in India is the world's largest outside any English-speaking country. And it has acquired a distinctive character in the way it uses the language and gives a different meaning to certain words.

In India, a hotel may be 'non-residential' where only food is served. Thus, the PR manager of Indian Airlines had to write and clarify in a Calcutta newspaper: "If any flight was delayed by over two hours, passengers would be taken to a hotel for food and refreshments and not as reported that 'passengers would be accommodated in a hotel'." So, the next time IA has one of those frequently encountered delays, don't count on being put up at a luxury hotel.

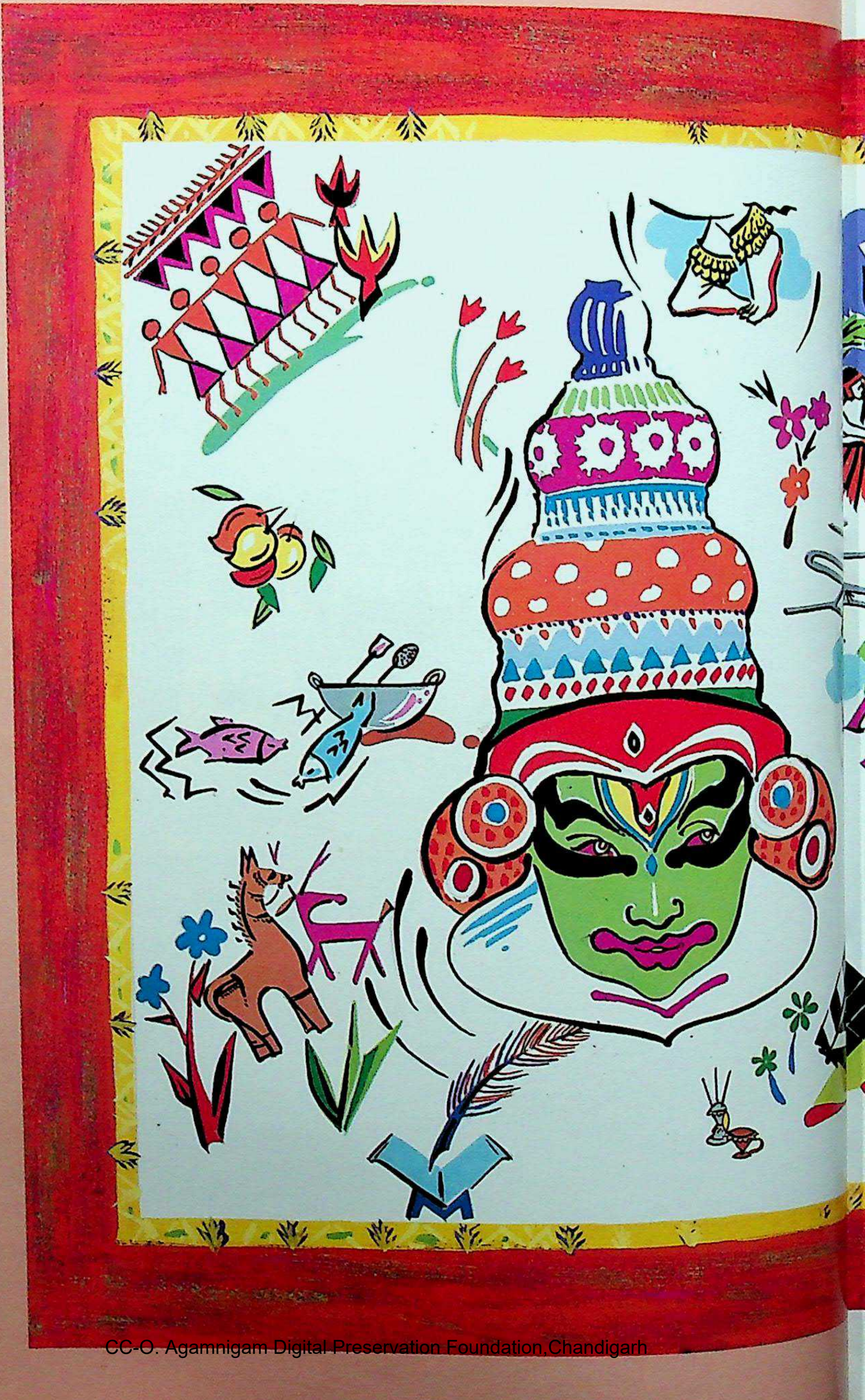
Newspapers still use phrases reminiscent of the pomp and arrogance of imperial masters. The Mughal gardens of the old Viceroy's palace are "thrown open" seasonally every year for viewing by the general public, not just kept open. Governors and chief ministers of states are "summoned" by the central government. And, dutifully, they "airdash" to New Delhi and, "demit office" if asked to do so. Flying or getting dismissed is for lesser mortals.

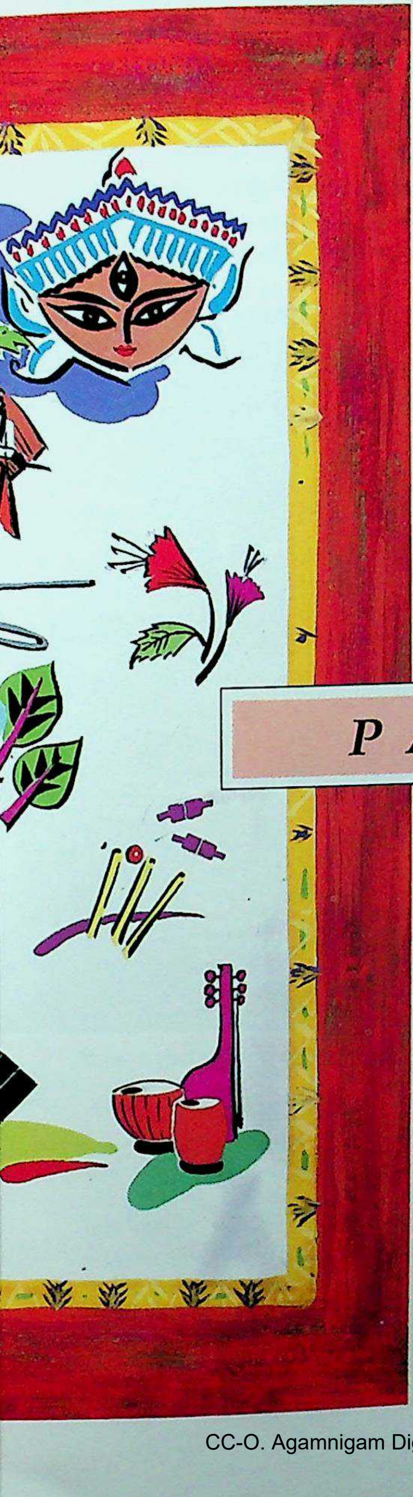
The Speaker of Parliament posed the question whether he should step down now itself, reports Press Trust of India, the leading news agency. The dignitary's fit of indignation called for an extra emphasis which phrases such as 'here itself' and 'today itself' provide. This usage is derived from the Hindi inflexion, *hee*, which is commonly used for the same purpose.

Classified ads in papers offer sociological glimpses. In the matrimonial columns men and women past the common age for marrying are described as 'boy' and 'girl', for that is how family members like to describe their wards for arranged marriages. And as status symbols increase in value, 'palatial three-storey bungalow' is offered for sale/lease, inflating its original meaning of a single-storeyed house with a low-pitched roof in the Bengal style. "Eve-teasing" and "roadside Romeos" are colourful terms coined to describe the Indian variety of an internationally known activity and its actors.


Normal life hit in Bengal, Kerala, Tripura
Mixed response to Bharat bandh
Today itself
आज ही
"KHADI"
CLOTH
"Thrown open"
"SWADESHI SPIRIT"
DHARNA

The freedom movement gave birth to many phrases frequently found in the papers — *khadi cloth* and the *swadeshi spirit*; *darshan* of the high and the mighty and "*dharna*" against the wrong-doer in an appeal for justice; cease work as an euphemism for strike. The British rulers had also substituted softer words such as 'externed' to describe political offenders who had been exiled and 'detenus' for persons who had been held in custody for political reasons. Newspapers still use such old-fashioned and unusual words.





FESTIVE INDIA

MUSIC IN INDIAN CULTURE

THE CLASSICAL DANCE FORMS OF INDIA

BOMBAY CINEMA

PART TWO

INDIAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

THE CUISINE OF INDIA

INDIAN LITERATURE

INDIAN SPORT : NO GOAL IN SIGHT

FESTIVE INDIA

LOUISE NICHOLSON

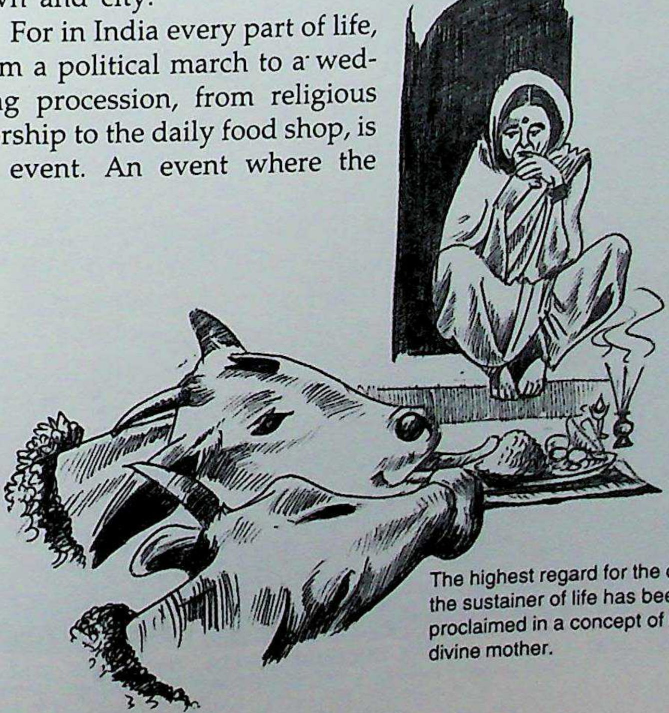
Kumbh Mela commemorating the victory of Gods over the demons in the holy town of Hardwar.

After studying the History of Art at Edinburgh University, Louise Nicholson began her career campaigning for the conservation of buildings with the Victorian Society. She has been a freelance journalist, researcher, writer and lecturer, covering all aspects of India, which she frequently visits. She wrote a weekly column for The Times throughout the Festival of India in Britain 1982, and more recently was Assistant Producer for the six-part television documentary The Great Moghuls. She is a founder-member of The Indian Art Circle and is the UK co-ordinator of a children's charity in Calcutta.

MID-MORNING in a dimly-lit Old Delhi back lane, and the still drowsy shopkeepers prick up their ears at the sound of a distant trumpet. It gets louder, seeming to gather momentum as it rounds the corner accompanied by pom-pomming drums, tinsel-framed banners, a motley collection of musicians, and multi-coloured flags waved cheerily by the children trotting along behind. Meanwhile, more than 2,000 kilometers to the south, a devout Hindu has paid for a very special puja ceremony to be performed in Madurai's temple-city dedicated to Meenakshi Sundareshwara. To the accompaniment of more musicians, a deity is promenaded through long corridors lined with glorious sculptures, escorted by chanting priests, and led by the temple's resident elephant.

Elsewhere across the sub-continent, ladies are out chasing bargains in Jaipur's cotton bazaar, doing deals for their daughter's dowry in Hyderabad pearl shops, drooling over saris in Varanasi's all but hidden silk bazaar, or simply ensuring they find the very best brinjals, deep pink garlic cloves and sunrise-yellow mangoes in the street markets of every village, town and city.

For in India every part of life, from a political march to a wedding procession, from religious worship to the daily food shop, is an event. An event where the



The highest regard for the cow as the sustainer of life has been proclaimed in a concept of her as a divine mother.

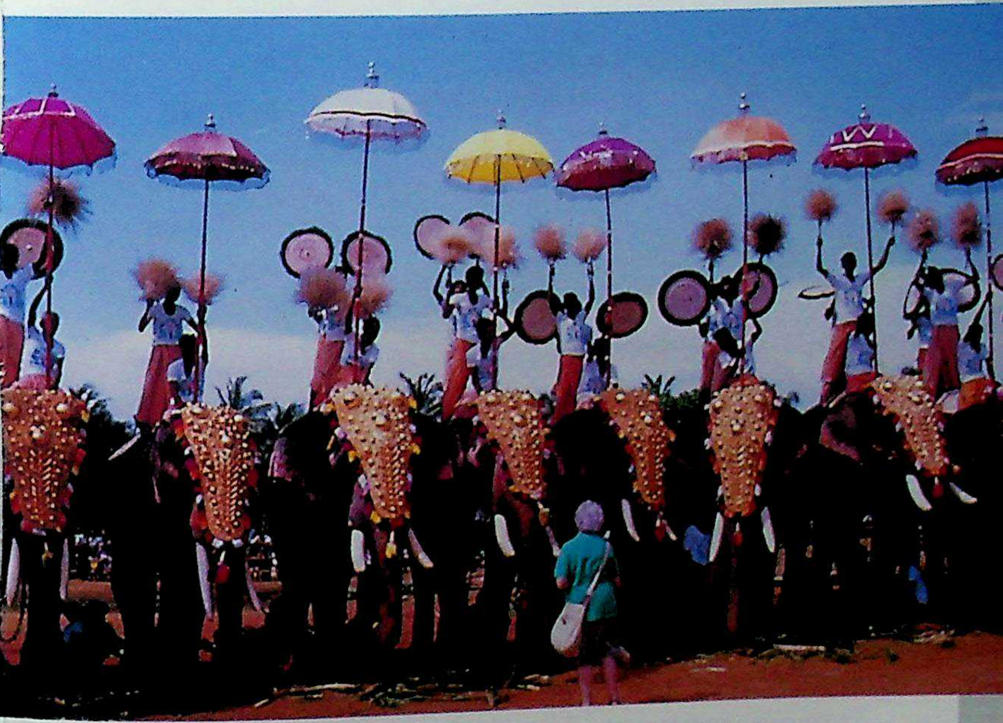
essential ingredients are colour, noise and a public audience. Compared to the rest of the world, India is in a state of perpetual celebration and festivity.

To bump into one of the many great religious festivals is to encounter — indeed, be swept up into — a crescendo of celebration reaching delirious heights. For locals and visiting pilgrims alike, it marks the high point of months of careful preparation.

The great Madurai temple, which continues to live almost at the scale of action for which it was conceived, celebrates two major festivals each year. It is then that the full throb of South Indian Hindu worship can be experienced. Most of the temple was built during the 17th century by the great Nayak ruler, Tirumala Nayak, and in January or February his birthday is marked by the Teepam, or Float, festival. The temple deities are dressed up in their finest silks, bejewelled and garlanded and then processed to the big tank. There they are dragged round on a huge barge, to the sound of music and chanting, their way lit by thousands of tiny oil lamps placed in the built-in niches of the tank walls. Later in the year, during April or May, Meenakshi Kalyanam celebrates the marriage of Meenakshi to Shiva and is held in the temple itself, which really constitutes most of Madurai. Pilgrims throng among the shops selling puja elements done up prettily into little basket kits, tourist mementos ranging from sandalwood elephants to wind-up toy fire engines and plastic green frogs, or piles of flower garlands threaded up each morning by nimble fingers. The crowd is huge, fervent and constantly jostling. Ten days of pre-festival preparations include serene music playing through most of the nights. On the big day, the two deities are processed on the great carved wooden rath, or chariot, hauled by the faithful through the temple.

Across in Kerala, the spectacular temple festival of Pooram takes to the streets. It is held at Trichur, in April or May, and is on a grand scale in all respects, from the size of the crowds to the quantity of ear-splitting music, fireworks and visual spectacle. Most of all, there is India's greatest gathering of lavishly decorated elephants. As the crowds pour in, wobbly bamboo vantage points are constructed, fairs set up and streets cleaned and carpeted with coconut leaves, pendants and oil lamps. It is easy to forget that this is a religious festival held in honour of the goddesses Paramekkavu and Thiruvambady and eight other deities.

On the eve of Pooram, 30 elephants arrive in town. Each has been chosen for its size and the beauty of its trunk, tail, ears and tusks, and each brings its supply of food, lorryloads of palm leaves. On Pooram morning they are dressed up in their finery in gold-plated chain mail called nattipattams. With a Brahmin sitting on top of each proudly holding the symbolic deity, silk parasol, and a peacock feather fan, the whole party lumbers off on a slow but glorious day-long procession of ritual and music, cheered on its way by the faithful and their offerings of rice and flowers. After sunset, the whole thing is repeated, lit by flaming torches and ending with a massive fireworks display before dawn. Finally, after a pause until 8 a.m., the elephants, priests and faithful reassemble for a morning of drumming and more fireworks.



Elephants dressed up in their finery on the eve of the Pooram festival.

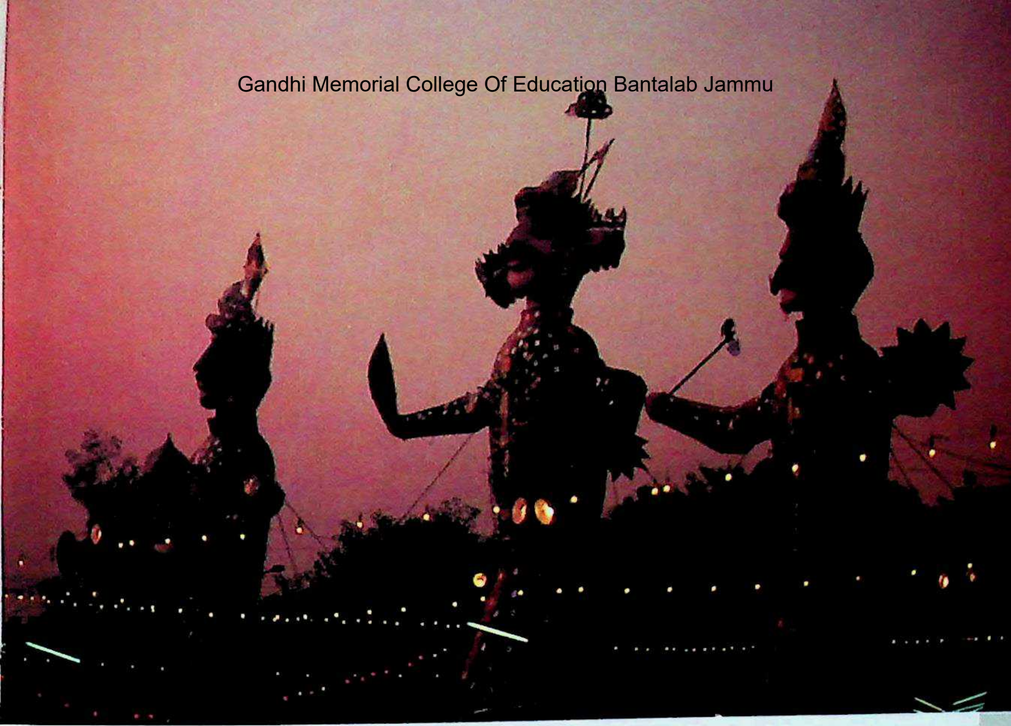
Fireworks, oil lamps and flaming torches are often an integral part of Indian celebration. Large towns have their firework-making areas where craftsmen work the year round to make gigantic sparklers, Roman candles and wickedly big rockets, some of them equipped with little parachutes containing plastic Ganeshas, god of prosperity and good fortune, which float gently down to earth to be prize catches for the hordes of children — Indian children are included in all celebrations, whatever time of day or night, and most festivals go on well into the night.

This is especially true of the two great festivals of Dussehra and Diwali celebrated in the autumn by Hindus all over India, and given extra colour by their regional variations. In Delhi, every arts hall is filled with plays, music recitals, contemporary dance and the North Indian classical dance, Kathak, which combines mime with dizzy twirling and dazzlingly speedy footwork. Each art performance will recount an episode from the great epic, the Ramayana, commemorating the time when the hero Rama, the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu, triumphed over the demon Ravanna in Sri Lanka and so freed his wife, Sita. Out on the streets, the story is told in daily processions through Old Delhi, and in open-air theatre performances at the Ramlila grounds.

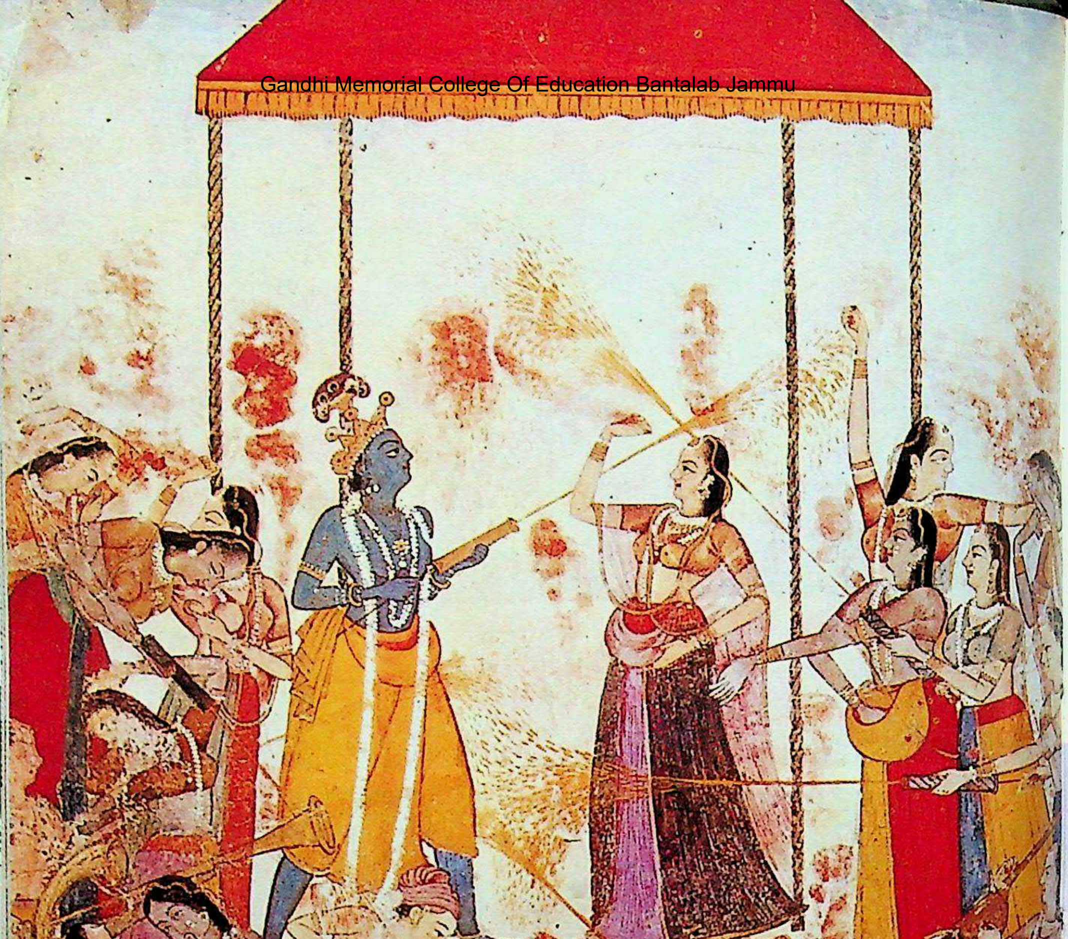
On the tenth day the procession is even more elaborate, as the crowds escort vast, firework-stuffed, painted paper effigies of the ten-headed wicked Ravanna and his relatives from Old Delhi to the Ramlila grounds. There the great battle is re-enacted, Sita is freed and the effigies are burned with bangs, cracks, whoops and a jolly fair.

A few weeks later Diwali follows, celebrating the return of Rama and Sita to Rama's hometown of Ayodhya in North India. It is a time for spring-cleaning the home, for shops to offer 'Diwali reductions', for gifts of sweetmeats, nuts and dried fruits to be given to relatives and friends, and for families to come together. At dusk on Diwali day, every home lights little oil lamps and places them on the windowsills and balconies to light the way home for Rama and Sita, while children in the streets let off yet more fireworks.

Eastwards, in Varanasi, the most holy of Hindu cities, the Ram Lila is even more spectacular than in Delhi. Held at



Above: Dussehra - a ten day festival where each night unfolds the story of Lord Rama's life in highly dramatized - sequences.
Below: Diwali - festival of lights.



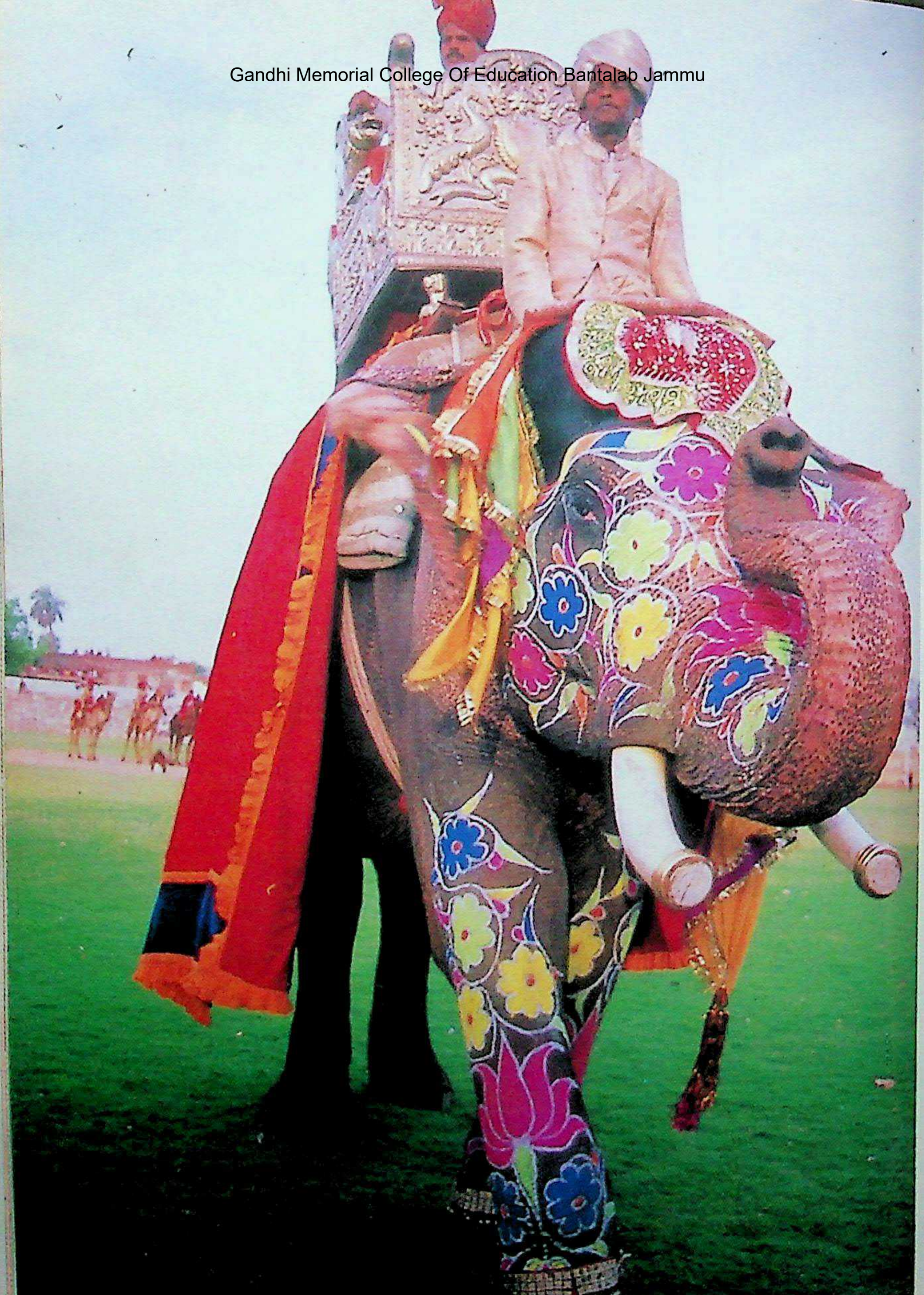
The Holi festival - Krishna and Radha are taking part in the spring festival, Miniature of the School of Chamba, 1775.

Ramnagar on the opposite bank from the ghats, and patronized by the former Maharaja, there are 30 days of music and plays, each play performed by specially selected and carefully trained actors whom the crowd comes to identify totally with the part each plays. Meanwhile, the sacred Ramayana is read continuously in the temples, the faithful taking turns. The whole festival ends with a climactic procession led by the former Maharaja dressed in gold and sitting on an elephant.

Further east still, the former British capital of Calcutta celebrates almost perpetually, taking in every denomination and every ethnic minority's special events. Bengalis enjoy more than 20 official, and a legion of unofficial, holidays, and let their hair down at any excuse, be it the Muslim Id, Christmas or a former political hero's birth or death anniversary.

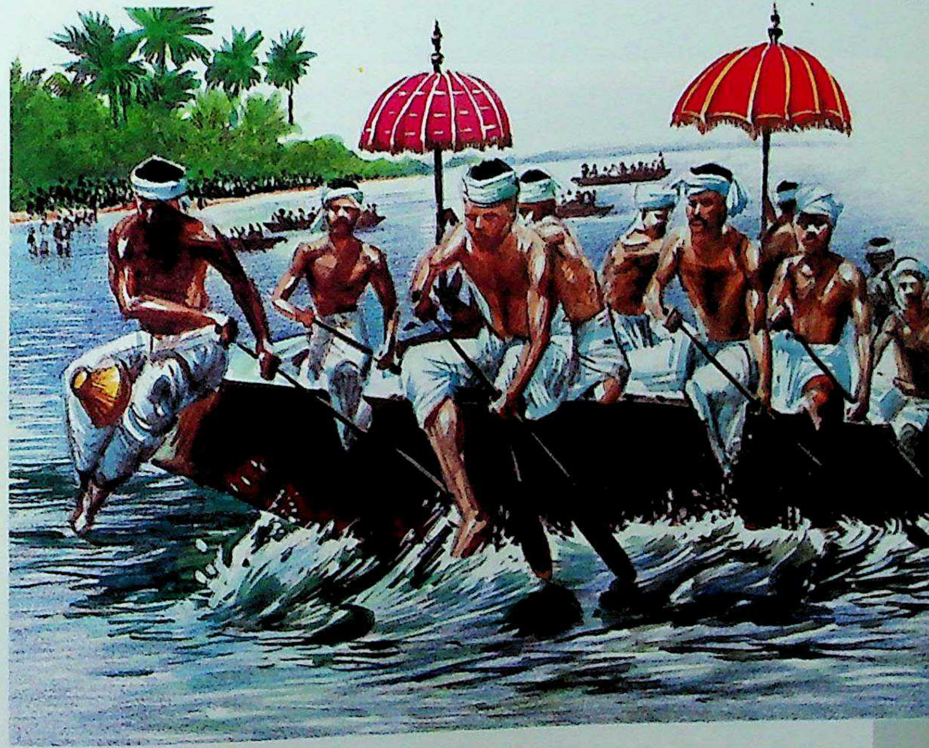
But the biggest Calcutta festival of all is Durga Puja, Bengal's version of Dussehra. All year long, the idol-makers of

The Bisarjan (immersion) ceremony of the images of Durga to mark the end of the Durga Puja festival.

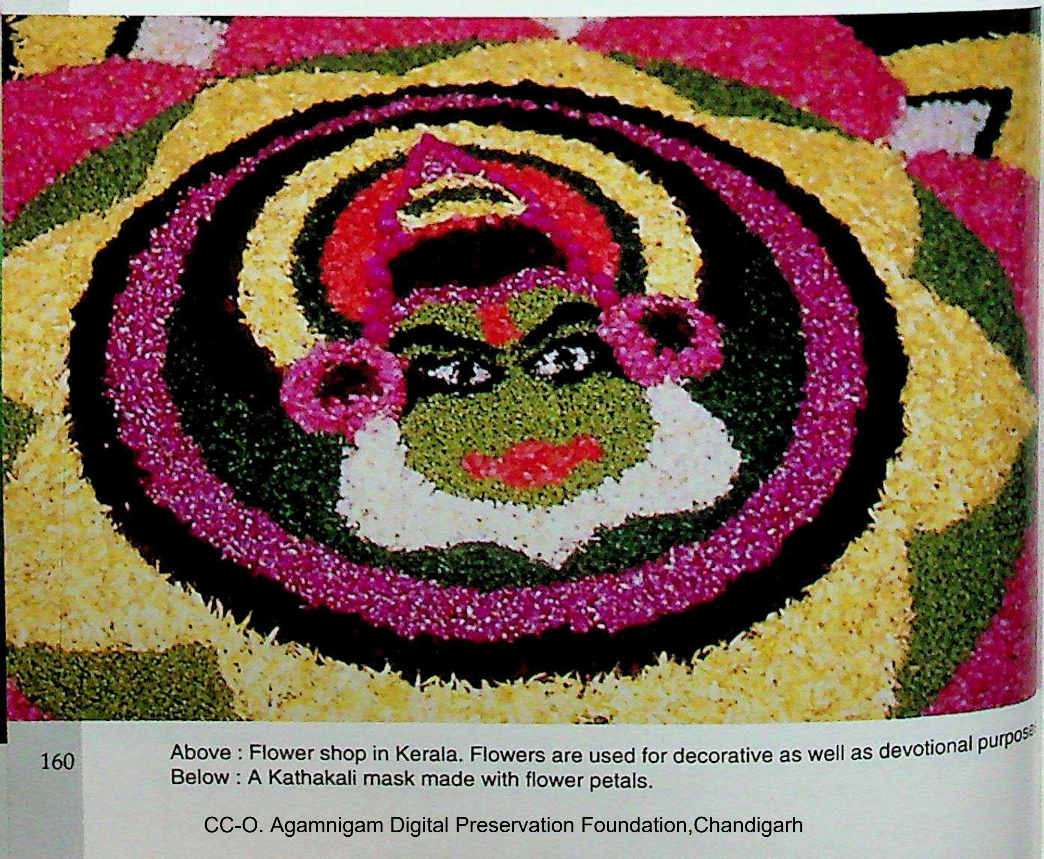


The brightly dressed and painted elephants in the Gangaur festival, Rajasthan.

Kumartuli district in north Calcutta create their terrifying images of Durga, the many-armed goddess of destruction who is a form of Parvati, Shiva's wife, and much revered in Bengal. Stimulated by nips of home-brewed liquor, they model the clay images around straw cores, and store them in the workshop eaves. Later, the chief *kumhar*, or potter, adds their distinctive features and expressions and the whole team paints and varnishes a thousand or so life-size or bigger Durgas to look like a great pile of gaudily-coloured Hindi film-stars. Remaining unbaked, since they are for religious use, the idols are carried through the city at the end of three weeks' riotous celebrations, during which business barely functions. The crowd escorts them through illuminated streets throbbing with music, finally



Down in the backwaters of Kerala finely decorated dugouts skim through the waters in the week-long snake boat races in the Onam festival of Kerala.



Above : Flower shop in Kerala. Flowers are used for decorative as well as devotional purpos
Below : A Kathakali mask made with flower petals.

reaching the Hooghly river and dunking each painstakingly-created goddess in the water, to be washed away and dissolved.

Dussehra in Mysore is quite different — indeed, it is said that the festival originated near here, in the great but now ruined city of Vijayanagar, capital of the empire which covered South India from the 1330s until its devastation at the battle of Talikota in 1565. Today, Mysore's celebration of good over evil is ten days of medieval pageantry ending with Vijayadashami, a sumptuous procession of caparisoned elephants (for which the area is famous), horses, cavalry and a host of garish and garlanded deities, ending, of course, with a grand burst of fireworks. As if this was not enough, there is a parallel festival of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, music and the arts, which brings a fine string of music and classical and folk dance performances to the buildings and grounds of Amber Vilas, the wacky, English-designed Indo-Saracenic palace built at the turn of the century.

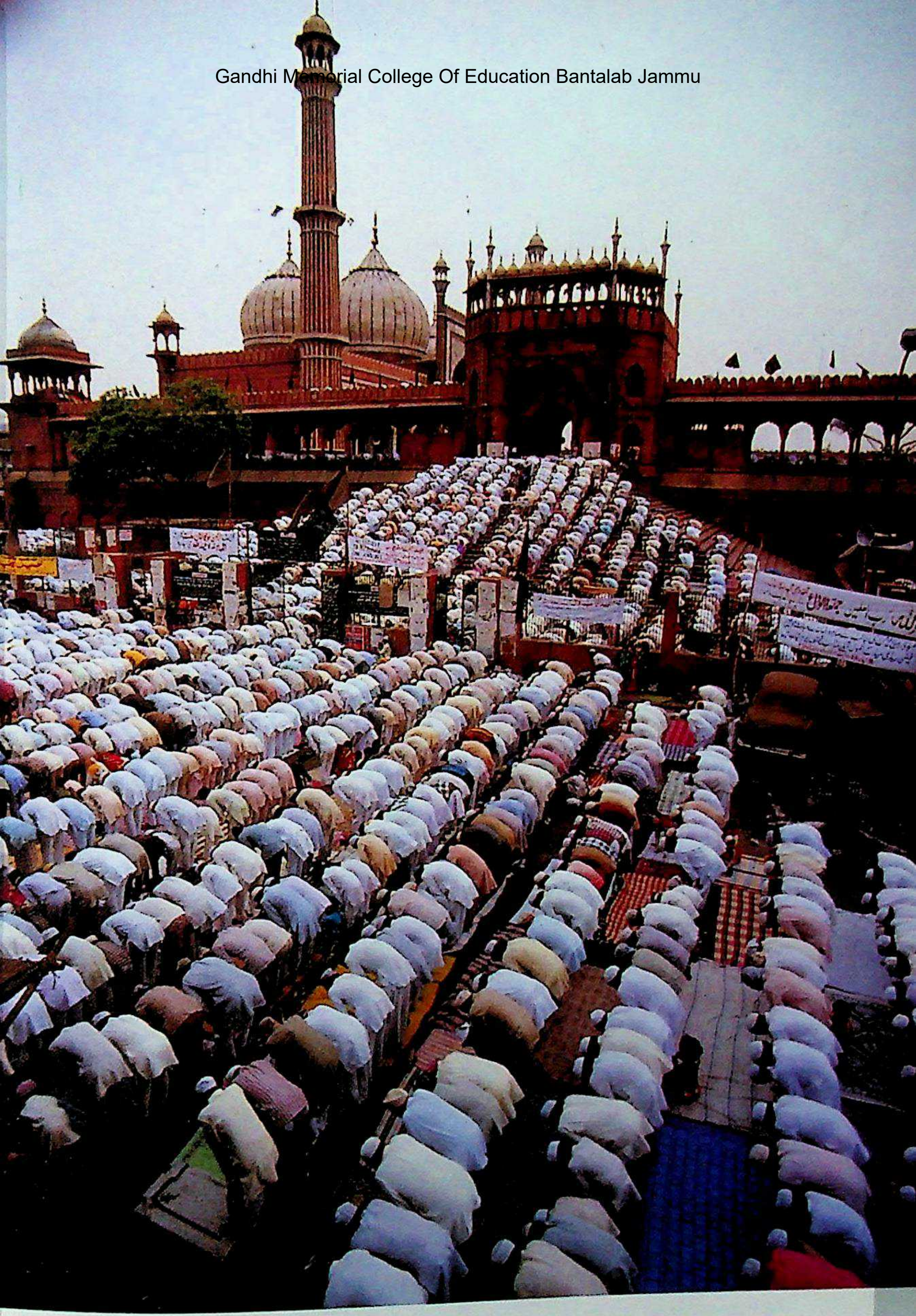
The great annual temple festivals and the all-India Dussehra and Diwali festivals are just the tip of the festival iceberg in India. Some of the most elaborate Hindu festivals take place only every twelve years, such as one at Kumbakonum. Others happen every three years but rotate their location. This is true of the huge Kumbh Mela, a religious fair celebrated by all Hindu sects as a religious cleansing supplemented by plenty of good food, markets and entertainment and held successively in Allahabad, Nasik, Ujjain and Hardwar.

Other Hindu festivals are more localized and mix a good dollop of pagan ritual or even modern politics into the celebrations. In Rajasthan, Holi celebrates the arrival of spring. On Holi eve, bonfires of unwanted possessions are lit at sunset symbolizing the end of the old year and the start of a fresh one. Bunches of fresh green lentils tied to a stick are singed in the purifying flames and then taken home to eat ceremoniously. The next day, Holi, laws and conventions are suspended until noon, and in this still traditional area of West India men and women flirt and play together, squirting each other with pink-coloured water or throwing clouds of pink powder as they dance through the streets accompanied by the beat of the great clang drum.

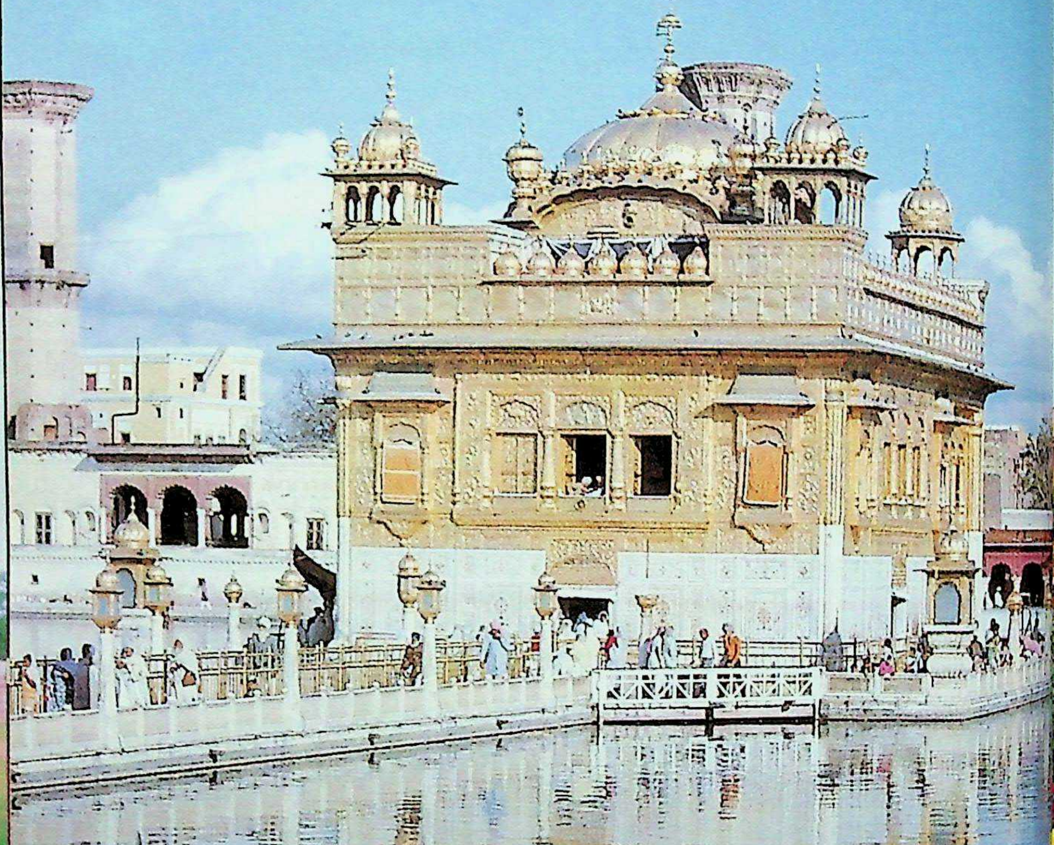
In southern Rajasthan, the spring associations with fertility are marked again a fortnight later by Gangaur. After the women have daily offered their prayers for marital bliss to images of Gauri, the goddess of fertility and abundance and yet another aspect of Shiva's wife Parvati, they put on their best clothes and, singing all the way, process the principal deity from her temple down to the lake for a ritual bath. Later in the year, at the height of summer, the women are out celebrating again for the Teej festival. It marks both the onset of the monsoon and the reunion of Shiva with Parvati. Wearing green veils, the women sing, dance and play on flower-bedecked swings hung from the trees, while in the state capital of Jaipur brightly-dressed elephants escort the image of Parvati back to her husband's home.

While Holi and Gangaur have some harvest associations, these are much more deliberate in South India. Kerala's Onam leads up to the full moon of August or September and combines harvest festival and New Year. The week of celebrations begins with new clothes, newly scrubbed homes, much feasting, and some dancing to greet the annual visit of the legendary king, Mahabali, famed for his prosperous reign. At the same time this lush, beautiful and water-filled state holds spectacular boat races on the backwaters around Kottayam. Long, low dug-outs called snake boats decorated with beak-shaped or kite-tailed sterns compete for the Nehru Cup, cheered along by families living on the ribbon-thin strips of land among the waters.

In Tamil Nadu, the harvest festival of Pongal is their most important celebration. After a successful rice harvest, crucial to rural India, the land, sun and animals are all thanked. Over four days of merriment, in mid-January, the usual home cleaning and bonfires of old goods is followed by general home maintenance, even rethatching. Then the women decorate the home, drawing exquisite kolams, or religious patterns, of moistened rice flour on pots, stove and front-door steps. On Pongal day, the newly harvested rice is boiled up with sugarcane, turmeric and other ingredients in the new pot. When the mixture is pongu, that is, boiling over, some is offered to Surya, the sun-god — the more it spills, the better the next harvest will be. The next day, called Maattu, or cattle, Pongal, the cows and bullocks, which are the farmers' most valuable investment, are washed, sprinkled with turmeric to ward off



Id prayers at the Jama Masjid, Old Delhi.



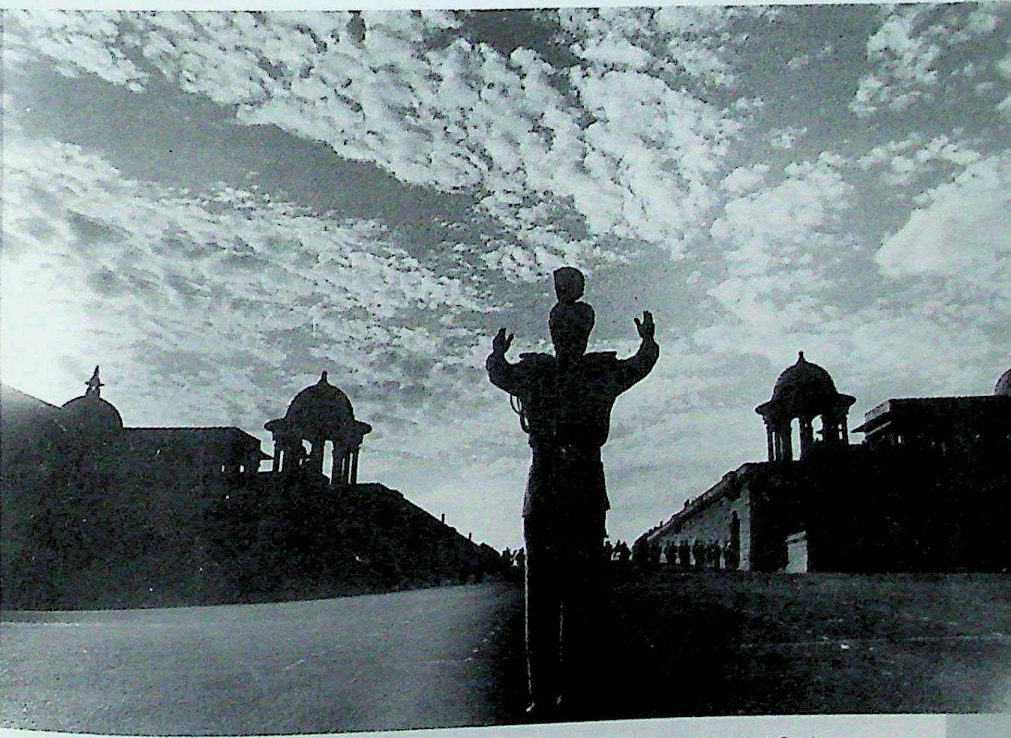
The Pool of Nectar dug by Guru Ramdas at Amritsar, and in the background the famous Golden Temple of the Sikhs.

Mughal Gardens in New Delhi open to the public during the flower seasons.

evil, anointed with red powder and have their long horns polished and painted in bright colours — occasionally the colours of the political party their master supports. Then, decked out with bells and garlands of coconut and mango leaves, flowers and sugarcane and palmyra shoots, more Pongal rice is offered to them before they are taken on parade round the village and then entered in local games whose nearest equivalent must be an American rodeo.

If there is a jot of political alliance in Pongal, there has been a considerable amount in Bombay's principal festival, Ganpati, although it might not seem so at first glance. Ganesh, the benign, big-bellied, elephant-headed god of learning, good fortune and prosperity, is given a ten-day birthday party by India's most avidly money-making city. Just as in Calcutta, clay models of Ganesh are made throughout the year. But in Bombay the largest of the 6,000 or so Ganeshas are commissioned collectively by factories who parade them on lorries, competing with their rivals to create the biggest, most gaudily-painted and decorated with multi-coloured lights and fountains. At the other end of the scale, little Ganeshas are set up at street corners and in homes, and puja performed daily. But every image is taken on the city parade on full-moon day, down to Chowpatty beach amid singing and dancing, to be immersed in the water and bob out into the Arabian Sea, gently disintegrating. It is hard now to remember that when the British banned public assemblies in 1894, Ganpati as we know it today was Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's way of spreading the freedom message through a legitimate religious festival.

Today's political festivities are undisguised. The great Republic Day Parade in Delhi held on January 26 to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution in 1950 is a holiday for everyone. Those not in the capital to take part in or watch the day-long parade of military prowess, gloriously decorated floats from every state, regional folk dancing and proud marching of men, horses, camels and elephants can sit and watch the whole thing, from the opening by the President, until sunset, on television. Three days later, the magical Beating Retreat ceremony is held at the bottom of Raisina Hill at sunset: massed bands perform a short parade ending with Gandhi's favourite hymn, 'Abide With Me', camels stand silhouetted



Above: Ganesh Chaturthi, the birthday of Lord Ganesh - the elephant-headed God.
Below : Beating Retreat at Vijay Chowk marking the end of the Republic Day celebrations.

Floral offerings.

against North and South blocks, a lone trumpt sounds the 'Last Post' as the sun sinks and, as the evening star comes out, fireworks burst into the darkening sky

Just as the political festivities — including the great rallies in the run-ups to state and general elections — have adopted all the music, pomp, singing, dancing and even elephants fit for a traditional Hindu festival, so other religions born or brought to India have enlivened their special annual events with local colour.

Muslims, who constitute about 11 per cent of the population, celebrate their festivals with tremendous vigour, especially Id-ul-Fitr marking the end of Ramazan, Id-ul-Zuhar commemorating Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Ishmael, and Muharram. The old Muslim centres of Old Delhi, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow maintain their traditions with pride, from pigeon-keeping and kite-flying on the flat rooftops at sunset to running the best kebab stalls. But even in a remote, seemingly all-Hindu village in Karnataka there will be a little mosque for the local Muslim community, where its muezzin puts his hand to his cheek to call the faithful to prayer five times a day — no microphones there.

However, the major festivals are celebrated most lavishly in the cities. In Old Delhi, whose Muslims are mostly Sunni the faithful fasting from dawn until nightfall (Ramzan) keep their eyes on the great Jami Masjid at sunset. There a tall pole has a light fixed to its end, red for fasting, green for eating and drinking. The moment it turns green, there is a mad dash to the quantities of carts, food stalls and cafés surrounding the mosque, especially for malpuva, a sweet egg pancake, and for the kebabs, breads and sweetmeats. Nights are lively, right round till the pre-dawn meal, sehri. And at Id-ul-Fitr the gourmandizing and celebrating reach a climax.

In Lucknow, where the Muslims are mostly Shi'ite, tradition is even stronger. For Muharram, which commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of the Prophet, great tazias — replicas of Hussain's tomb made of brass, silver, tinsel and multi-coloured mica — are prepared throughout the year in Kazmein in the Saadatganj area. The finest will be stored from year to year in the imambaras, the Shi'ite tombs. On the festival itself, for nine days mourning men parade the tazias, accompanied by drummers and sometimes lashing themselves in sorrow. There are passion plays performed on the streets, and the Ulema, or religious scholars, give readings and commentaries in the mosques.

In addition to bringing their religion to India, the waves of Muslim invaders brought their culture, including the very beautiful Urdu poetry and Sufi thought, the more mystical strain of Islam. It is at the dargahs, or tombs, of the Sufi saints that this poetry is read and sung today, often on a birth or death anniversary of the saint. Two magical places to witness these night-long performances are Nizamuddin, the oldest living area of Delhi, and Ajmer, a Muslim nugget amid the Hindu Rajputs of Rajasthan. At Nizamuddin, the faithful gather at sunset and sit quietly on the ground surrounding the dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia. Slowly the music begins, to be joined by light choral qawwalis which are songs designed to heighten religious experience and were invented by the 14th century court poet Amir Khusrau, who is buried nearby. At Ajmer, six days and nights of continuous music, fairs, qawwalis and dancing dervishes mark the death anniversary of the saint who brought Sufism to India, Khwajah Muin-ud-din Chishti. Since this Urdu music was born in the courts and shrines, the dargahs have qawwali singing at a quieter level on most days.

At a quieter level, Jains celebrate their Tirthankaras, or saints, at their religious centres, especially during the March-April Mahavir Jayanti festival devoted to Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara. Satrunjaya, near Palitana in Gujarat, is their most sacred of five, temple-coated sacred hills. The faithful, dressed in simple white cotton, often walk to the hill as part of their pilgrimage, the old carried in dolis, or string chairs. They then climb four kilometres of steps to reach the white marble jungle of almost 900 temples, each profusely carved and housing deities studded with gold and jewels. In this surreal setting there is no clamour for religious fervour, just the quiet, intensely moving murmurs of 100,000 devotees at prayer.

Sikhs, too, have their special celebrations, such as the day in spring when they remember Guru Govind Singh's formation of Sikhs into the Khalsa, or pure one, in 1689, and mix their singing and dancing with the more generally celebrated Baisakhi, the spring festival marking the Hindu solar New Year.

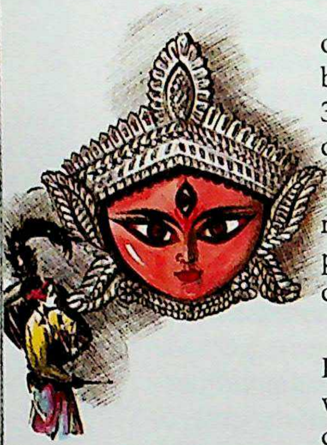
Christians have come to India from Portugal, England, Scotland, France and on a host of missionary journeys representing almost every denomination. Indeed, there are more Christians than Sikhs in India, Kerala's population is 25% Christian, their churches a glorious multi-coloured mish-mash of Portuguese, Dutch and British architecture where Christmas, Easter and even a regular Sunday matins or mass have taken on some local pageantry and colour. Syrian Christian events in Kerala happily mix religion with politics, staging lavish fireworks displays before an audience of church elders and Delhi politicians; whereas the Roman Catholic processions in Goa on the Feast of St Francis Xavier or of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, both in early December, mix Mediterranean baroque with coconut palms. As for the lingering British Raj influence, it has been known for Father Christmas to arrive at a children's party on an elephant.

The Raj instigated some of today's most colourful secular festivals, too, for by no means all celebrations in India are religious. The great flower shows of Delhi have their most competitive entries from the Indian malis, or gardeners, who maintain Lutyens' roundabouts as a riot of colour, each hoping to place the coveted sign 'First Prize Middle Sized Roundabout' on his plot in February. And the flower show in the Lal Bagh botanical gardens of Bangalore in January is a high point in the winter calendar. Secular too are many of the arts festivals, from the nights of music celebrating the Mughal musician Tansen at Gwalior to the dances at the sublime Khajuraho temples. Even trade fairs are festive in India, such as Nagaur's cattle fair, Pushkar's camel fair, the world's largest livestock fair at Sonepur in Bihar. And the opening of a new factory or business headquarters will not merely have a special puja ceremony: it is likely to begin with a great street procession and end with music and fireworks at the garlanded building illuminated with thousands of fairy lights.

Moving around India, it is easy to feel that the whole country is on one long festive holiday. Gaggles of brightly-saried girls splash out at Jaipur's bangle bazaar; an elegant lady waits for a huge bouquet to be made up in Mysore flower market; a Bengali swathed in fine white cotton rummages through piles of old books on College Street, while ladies sit in air-conditioned jewellery shops having their potential gold purchases weighed out on tiny but hair-precise scales. Outside, a chef is tossing dough into the air like a juggler to make romali roti, while down on the pavement one man is ordering up his particular mix from a paan-seller and another is sitting silently enrapt by an astrologer's forecast. In a nearby lane, cheap golden turbans, money garlands, plastic pearl necklaces and all the accoutrements for a modest man's wedding are sold beside brightly painted papier-mache masks to be used in Ramlila plays. And round the corner comes a trumpeter, some drummers and their flag-waving followers. It is all part of India's daily festival.

A TOP TWENTY OF INDIAN FESTIVALS

1. Pooram : Held at Trichur, in Kerala, where the whole town abandons itself to honour almost a dozen gods with the longest, most dazzling parade of Kerala's most beautiful elephants.



2. Dussehra : Celebrated all over India. At Ramnagar, opposite the holy ghats of Varanasi, specially selected boys and men act out the Ramlila scene by scene over 30 days, their audience spellbound into giving the actors deity status.

3. Durga Puja : The people of Calcutta, Hindus and non-Hindus alike, join in the great procession of brightly-painted, multi-limbed clay figures of the goddess of destruction, finally immersing them in the Hooghly.

4. Holi : Across northern India, but especially in Rajasthan, conventions are suspended until noon on Holi while men and women play and sport with pink-coloured water and powder.

5. Diwali : Throughout India, but especially in the north, families come together, give sweetmeats to their friends, and light Rama and Sita's way home with tiny oil lamps.

6. Amir Khusrau Urs : At the tiny, medieval village of Nizamuddin tucked away in New Delhi, Muslims and lovers of Urdu poetry and music gather to listen to a night of qawwalis, light choral songs written and devised by the 14th century poet to heighten religious experience.

7. Dassehra : In the palace-strewn city of Mysore, in Karnataka, 10 days of medieval pageantry reach their climax with a sumptuous procession of elephants, horses and garlanded deities.

8. Pongal : In Tamil Nadu, where the rice crop is all-important, its harvest in January is celebrated with a great overflowing rice brew and with rodeo-style races by the much-loved bullocks.

9. Khajuraho Dance Festival : The magnificently sculpted temples of the Chandella rulers are the perfect setting for India's top performers of classical dance-drama, which originally evolved in and for the temple.

10. Mahavir Jayanti : Up on the Jains' sacred hills, a particular serenity of worship fills the air as 100,000 pilgrims dressed in white murmur their prayers amid the jungle of white marble temples.

11. The Kite Festival : Using string specially prepared with crushed glass, the top kite-flyers meet at Ahmedabad to pitch their skills and compete in bringing down their opponents' fragile paper birds.

12. Beating Retreat : Adopting British ideas of massed bands and giving them Lutyens's New Delhi as a background, this short sunset ceremony ending with a lone trumpet sounding 'The Last Post' is intensely moving.

13. Teepam : The great temple city of Madurai gives its deities an outing, dressing them up in silks, jewels and garlands to drag them round the city tank on a great barge.

14. Tansen Music Festival : In the shadow of the massive Gwalior Fort, the Mughal Emperor Akbar's Master of Music, Tansen, is honoured by top musicians playing round the clock the dhrupad music and Gwalior gharana he did much to develop.

15. Bharat Natyam Festival : At the great Chola temple at Chidambaram, dedicated to Shiva as Nataraj, Lord of the Dance, pupils of the classical Bharat Natyam dance which evolved in southern temples give their first public performances in the dance mandapa.

16. Muharram : The Shi'ite Muslims of Lucknow remember Hussain's death with street processions of glittering tazias, imitating his tomb, and with street plays and discourses.

17. Onam : Down in the backwaters of Kerala, finely decorated dug-outs skim through the waters in the week-long snake boat races.

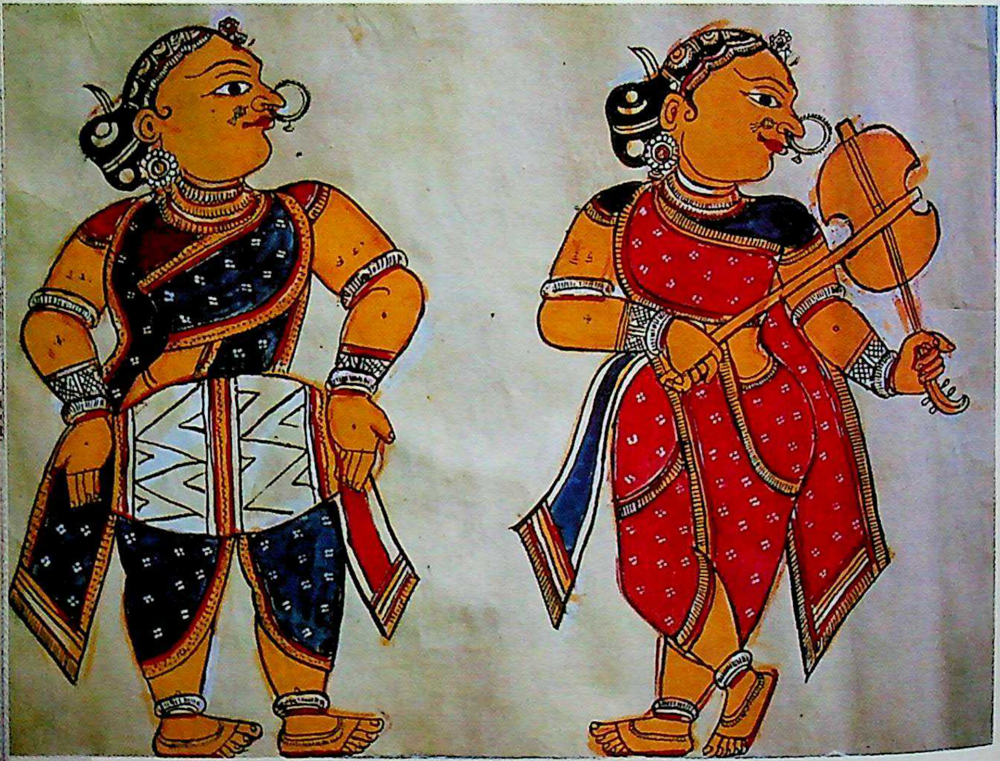
18. Kumbh Mela : Hindus of every sect come together to create their largest religious gathering and fair every three years, a miracle of administrative and human organization.

19. Ganpati : Commercial Bombay's annual jamboree to honour the elephant-headed god of learning and prosperity takes to the streets with a massive procession of painted deities of all sizes, ending at Chowpatty Beach.

20. Rath Yatra : The quiet coastal town of Puri, in Orissa, is innundated with pilgrims annually, all coming to help haul the great raths, or chariots, carrying the deities of Jagannath, his brother and sister off for a week's holiday and back again.

MUSIC IN INDIAN CULTURE

RAGHAVA R. MENON

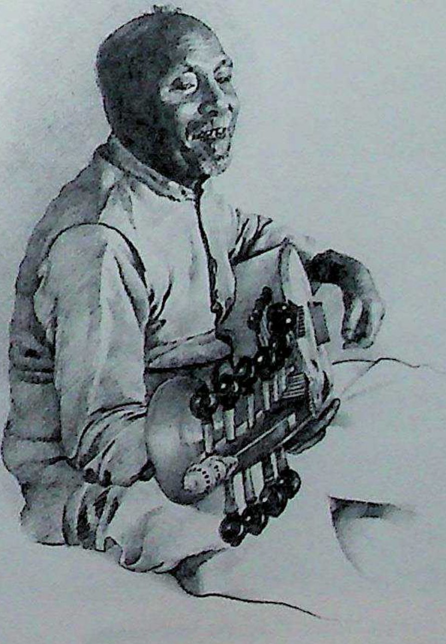


RAGHAVA R. MENON, author of several books on music, has published widely in magazines and newspapers in India and abroad. He has lectured in the United States and European universities and contributed to the Sohlmann Musik Lexikon. His books include Discovering Indian Music, The Sound of Indian Music — A Journey into Raga, which has been translated into German and French and Russian, and The Pilgrim of the Swara — A Life of K.L. Saigal which has gone into its second edition. He contributes regularly to The Times of India on Indian Music and to The Hindustan Times on Western Music.

A MUSIC has very little to say if it is not culture specific. It might well be that we share a lot of life's essential substance across cultures but its recognisable characteristics and its message has to belong in a culture. Otherwise it will merely be sweet sounds, natural and universal.

In the world's inheritance of classical music it could be said that the Western and the Indian musical traditions are, among others, two important and principal ones. The Western musical scale is a tempered one and designates specific frequencies that are equidistant from each other. In the Indian system, on the other hand, it is the interval that is fixed, the notes themselves are not. Consequently the Indian scale does not have C, D, E and so on but instead has only the Do Re Mi Fa. . . . In the Indian tradition there is no instrument comparable to the piano and therefore it has no unalterable frozen point of reference.

This is the first and the most fundamental difference between the two systems. There are others that follow as a consequence of third difference. Because of this difference the first significant reality of Indian music is that this music is not



Baba Ustad Alauddin Khan excelled in Sarod, Sitar, Tabla and Pakhawaj. An ideal Guru to many a brilliant instrumentalist, namely Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan and Panna Lal Ghosh.

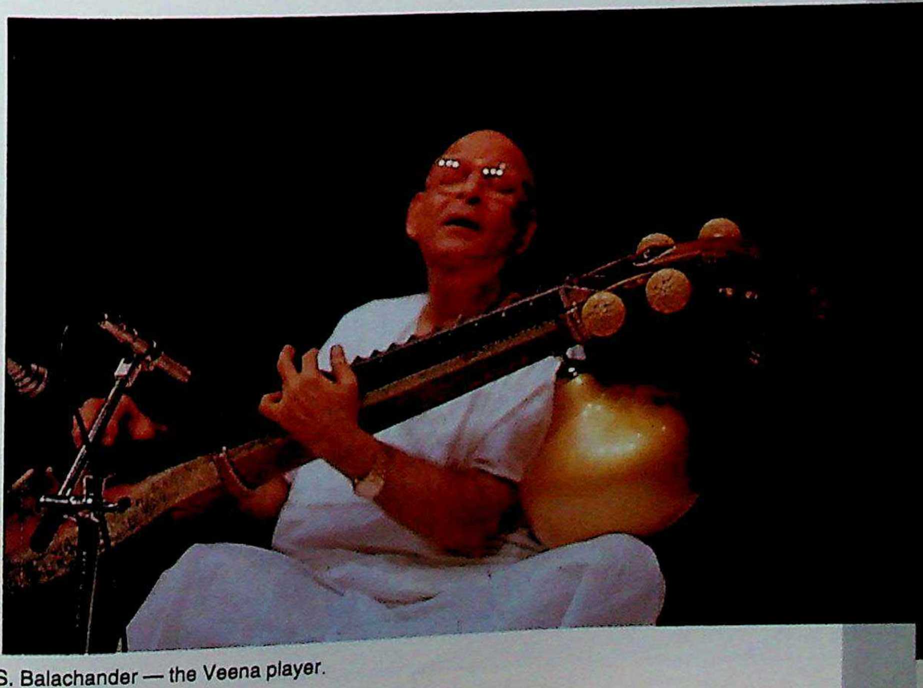
written down and played faithfully from a written score. All of Indian music as a consequence has to be transmitted orally from teacher to student so that the greatest and the longest direct musical memory is not literally accessible beyond two generations.

What this truly means is that Indian music has very little history beyond the memory of the generations concerned. Beyond two generations all history is reduced to myth and legend so that the singers and the players, who populate the history of Indian music, are always outsize figures of mythical power and proportion. Men whose stature seem larger than life, with voices of magical enchantment and power that are almost God-like in significance. So that a musician acquires his past through the musical blood stream of his family by the direct transmission of the technique of the music and its informing spirit trained into him in such a way that the student is able to

Ustad Vilayat Khan, the Sitar maestro.

create originally from within himself. He is no longer derived from his tradition but is the tradition. He becomes the leading edge of the music he exemplifies and becomes valid as only living traditions can. There are, therefore, no reliable historic landmarks to time musical history. For example, in Western music there is the Gregorian period, the medieval, the Renaissance, the Modern, etc. In Indian music it is all one. Just as there is no 18th century rose or pre-war lilies so there are no Ragas of yesterday. There is only the Raga that is being played or sung now. That for Indian music is enough and that is a lot.

Indian music is defined as melodic in character, that is, it moves in a straight line, sequence following sequence, serially, whereas Western music is defined to be harmonic. That is, it has a dimension in addition to its horizontal motion, perpendicular to it....This is often called the vertical extension of melody. This is achieved by sounding together several dissimilar notes which are related to each other by concordance. That is a relationship of mutual harmony. It is because of this fact that Western



S. Balachander — the Veena player.

musical compositions are put together note by note in the direction of space, while Raga is organic of one piece and whole.

In almost all ancient societies indigenous music has taken a back seat in the face of the onslaught of Western music. Most indigenous music has retreated in museums, archives and academies. Only in India has traditional music not merely retained its pre-eminent position in society but grown and developed over the last several decades. It would be naive to imagine that this development and growth has been due to India's independence from British rule and the national Government's support to survive. It is a highly internal and personal issue, and difficult to encourage through official interest. It has survived and developed because thousands of Indians are enthralled by its magic and enchantment. And the

Pandit Bhimsen Joshi of the Kirana Gharana.

sacrifices necessary to achieve impressive capacity in it becomes attainable to those who care for the art.

There have been sustained efforts to harmonize Indian music over the last several decades. This was due to the desire of many musicians to acquire on behalf of Indian music the same power, range and physical impact which Western music possesses to a marked degree. Those who tried to introduce harmony into Indian music were, fortunately, men who were masters of the Raga and not merely musicologists and sociologists of music. This was lucky. For soon these men discovered that to harmonize Indian music along Western lines

Kishori Amonkar of the Jaipur Gharana.

Jugalbandi — Ravi Shankar on Sitar and Alla Rakha on Tabla (Right to Left).

was to destroy the Raga. And what it produced was not Indian music harmonized along Western lines but incompetent and trivial Western music. With this discovery, efforts to make Western music with Raga could be said to have been more or less abandoned.

Raga gets laundered out of a musical phrase the moment vertical writing is introduced into it. The result is that it is not possible to manipulate the Raga at all. As Alain Danielou used to say that, "The only way to harmonize Raga along the lines of Western music would be to reconstitute the Raga genetically. Otherwise it is better to leave the Raga alone." Being a highly personal and internal statement Raga naturally has at least one limitation and this is a major one. For example, a Raga's utility in producing powerful dramatic effects such as description of time, place and history, of fear and terror or of suspense is limited so that the use of Indian Raga music as background score in films tends to be naive and simplistic and this is borne out by plenty of evidence. A score like that of "Ben Hur" or "Exodus" or "Doctor Zhivago" is almost impossible to achieve. A hundred-piece Western symphony orchestra can produce a sound as powerful in impact as a tornado or an avalanche. The sheer body of its sound, the combination of drum, cymbal, saxophone, trumpet, violin, cello, piano, etc. could be as overpowering and annihilating as an obliterating tidal wave. In comparison Indian music is solo, its accompaniment merely

Left: Ustad Bismillah Khan, the Shehnai player of Benaras Gharana.
Right : Flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia.

supportive and in sound not more than the chamber. Obviously then the two types of music go in different directions and serve the human being listening to it in dissimilar ways. The two cultures — the Indian and the Western — are looking for different things in life. The Western produces physical sensations more easily and more competently than the Indian does. Indian music, on the other hand, produces a luminous internal world of hypnotic beauty and tenderness. It is difficult to translate this dimension into the outer world of human history — of wars, revolutions and personal human tragedy. The vitality of Indian music whose principle has survived through thousands of years can only be ascribed to the fact that the internal world of man has always been with him and was never the product of external history and of durations of time. It has never had to change to keep up with the times, with fashions or with the historical circumstance of each age. Significantly, therefore, there is no innovation and change in it to suit the transient fashions of any epoch. Evolution therefore in the conventional sense can be said to be almost entirely absent in Indian music. Like the flowers and the sky and the changing seasons it is always the same and always new. This is the secret of the life of Indian music — its timelessness. Perhaps this is also the reason why history and intention have not been able to change its nature.

All music uses the notes of the musical scale, but Raga music does not use notes. It uses swaras. The note and the swara are not the same. The conceptual idea behind this differentiation goes as follows. A musical sound can be produced by any mechanical means. Any friction, percussion, vibration of columns of air, any of these in any number of ways can produce a musical note. The concept of swara is that, it is a musical sound that can be only produced by the human voice and only the human voice can produce a perfect swara. Etymologically the word swara can be broken up into its two Sanskrit halves — 'Swa' which means the "Self", and 'Ra' which means "to shine forth". Swara therefore is a shining forth of the self.

Only a human being has a "Self" to which he could have some access and which is a product of his inner life. This is the reason why a human voice cannot but have a proportion of swara in it. Because no human being can exist without some measure of an inner life, and the inner life is the source of swara. Without swara there is no Raga. The development of swara in the voice becomes the most important and vital direction of the work in Indian music. The swara appears as an inaudible presence within a musical note. The content of swara is not the same in voices and changes from person to person. Some have this quality naturally a little more than others. But everyone can develop the swara in his voice by a special process of discipline. This is often called Sadhana. Sadhana is to swara-based music what practice is to note-based music. Discovering the swara for oneself is the true adventure in Indian music. It is at once the heart-break and the triumph in the life of an Indian musician.

The swara is believed to be a region within the note, deep inside its inner recesses, within which is postulated kind of deity which the musician quickens and brings to life. Without this inner deity quickening the note, the swara is lifeless and does not communicate the essence of the singer. Often this deity is conceived as the Dhyana Roopa of the swara, on its meditative form. From the description given above, inadequate though it is, it is not impossible to grasp that this discovery of the resident deity in each note is altogether a different kind of seeking in music and lies at right angles to the usual effort of acquiring knowledge and skill in it. Reaching this region in swara is a life-long process. Beginning in his teens or even earlier the young musician defines the nature of swara differently as he grows older so that the seeking never ends. This search is what makes a pilgrim out of an Indian musician.

Ragas are born from swaras. The rules and specifications of Ragas are the product of a consensus. The Ragas were born free unimpeded by prohibitions. The rules were formulated later after musicians had heard them perhaps for decades and then decided to recapitulate its structures and codify them by genus in a kind of musical Periodic Table.

What made a particular set of notes into a Raga was the power and conviction of its earliest singer. The indubitable integrity and enchantment of his inner world. The grammar of the Raga was an after-thought. It used to be a practice until very recent times to teach a Raga wholly by ear, never really revealing the Aroha and the Avaroha or any other characteristic to the student until the student was able to sing it with conviction. It was only after this was achieved that the student was told the rules of the Raga. This was a holistic grasp of the spirit and innards of a Raga in one encompassing instant. An experience that had no parts.

The difficulty in understanding the nature of Ragas comes from confusing the Raga with the concept of the Mode. Ragas are not merely horizontal relationship between notes whether concordant or otherwise. The first difference lies in the fact that the Raga is not made from notes and modes are built from notes. That is one reason why Ragas cannot be compared to modes. The presence of swaras in a scale gives a small notionally perpendicular extension to every note and there lies its clue. This perpendicular extension gives a note a particular quality, a communicative resonance without any graces whatever, without even a vibrato. This perpendicular component of swaras is not audible in the usual sense but is felt emotionally.

There is a recipe for a Raga according to the Shastras. Ragas are made from groups of notes of the musical scale and each Raga has a distinct anatomy of its own. This is determined by various prescriptions such as a certain stipulated number of notes up and down the scale, some to be omitted, some to be used in a particular order, certain symmetries and progressions, a gait and a pacing, specific patterns of silence of stress and release, a specification also of time and season.

A minimum of 5 notes is prescribed for a Raga. Without 5 notes the Shastras state that no Raga can be formed. It could have varying numbers of notes ascending and descending the scale and certain characteristic grouping called 'Pakad' and two notes one each of the tetrachords called 'Vadi' and 'Samavadi'.

The fulfilment of all these conditions does not necessarily mean that a Raga would be born. There is also an absolute and minimum condition which cannot be overlooked. This is the issue of life. A Raga is a living entity and life is its measure, and there are two kinds of life a Raga must manifest. If a Raga's prescription is followed faithfully a potential for life is at once established and there is a throbbing and stirring within it. But it does not quicken until the singer of the player of the Raga has put his own life into it. Then of course a Raga becomes timeless and true. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to concoct a Raga. Because of its demand to life several thousands of Ragas can be potentially concocted from the 12 notes of the musical scale. But while this is technically possible it is difficult to get several thousand lives to quicken these Ragas. The result is that several thousand potential Ragas are moribund and inert. The need for life in a Raga is a peremptory condition and there is no way of avoiding this need by faking it. This was one reason why musicians tend to be diffident in making new Ragas. Because instinctively they know that after fulfilling the need of the traditional Ragas they perform there is very little life left in them to absorb and kindle a new Raga. And when musicians say that they have invented a new Raga it often withers on its stalk even as it is born;that is why it does not live beyond half a concert.

Rhythm is part of a living organism such as a human body. That is because within it there is the continuing heartbeat of life. The "Lub and Dub" of the beating heart. So to a certain extent the sense of rhythm is prior to and basic to the human being. Even an infant responds to rhythm more easily than tone. The word MA-MA for example, repeats a syllable in order to impinge it into the memory of the child. Physiology comes to the aid of Tala while swara has to be felt and apprehended in a more aware level of the consciousness.

But let us remember that Tala and rhythm are not the same. Just as swara is the inner side of a musical note, Tala is the inner side of rhythm : just as a musical note can be mechanically produced, swara has to be acquired. While rhythm can be mechanically contrived, Tala has to be acquired. While rhythm can be mechanically contrived, Tala has to be cultivated. Tala is essentially a part of the linguistic inheritance of a people. It resides in the knowledge of the silence of a language, the pause and the imminence of revealed meaning. It is always possible to acquire the knowledge of a language by learning words developing a vocabulary and their meanings. This can be achieved even by consulting a dictionary. But a knowledge of this kind, however proficient, will continue to keep the knower at the level of a foreigner in that language. It is the knowledge of the silence of a language that makes the language your own. This is the distinction between Tala and rhythm.

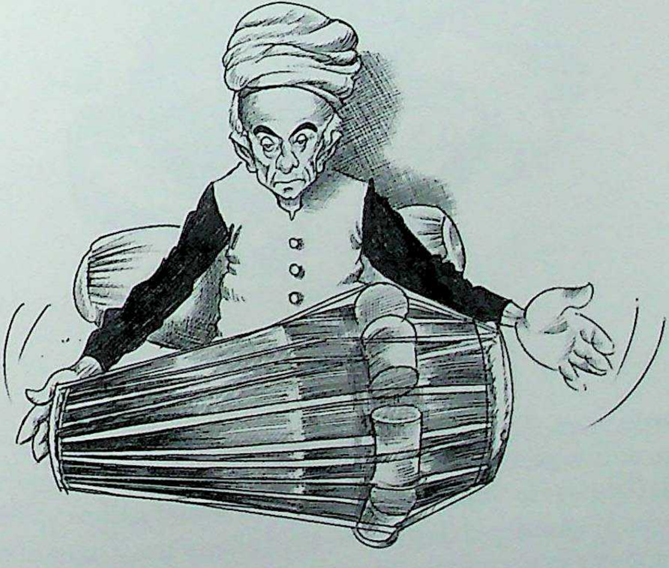
It is because of the nature of Tala that it is possible to see a well-known Shakespearean play again and again despite the fact we may know the play by heart and may have seen it a hundred times before in our lives. But each time the play seems new as though you were seeing it for the first time. This is because of the spoken words whose Tala is reborn each time you utter the lines. Like Raga, Tala too is always fresh and newly created each time in its own context and in its own language.

Another characteristic difference between rhythm and Tala is that rhythm is linear and open-ended while Tala is cyclic and closed. It returns to itself after a brief traverse of Six, Seven, Eight, Ten, Twelve, Fourteen, Sixteen, Twenty-four or Forty-eight beats. This design of repeating cycles is what makes the concept of Tala one of the most unique in the world. Its organization is interesting too. It begins with an accented beat called the "Sam" which releases a tension towards another point

Gandhi Memo College Of E Ja

Amir Khusrao invented tabla in the 14th century AD by cutting the Pakhawaj into two parts. Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain.

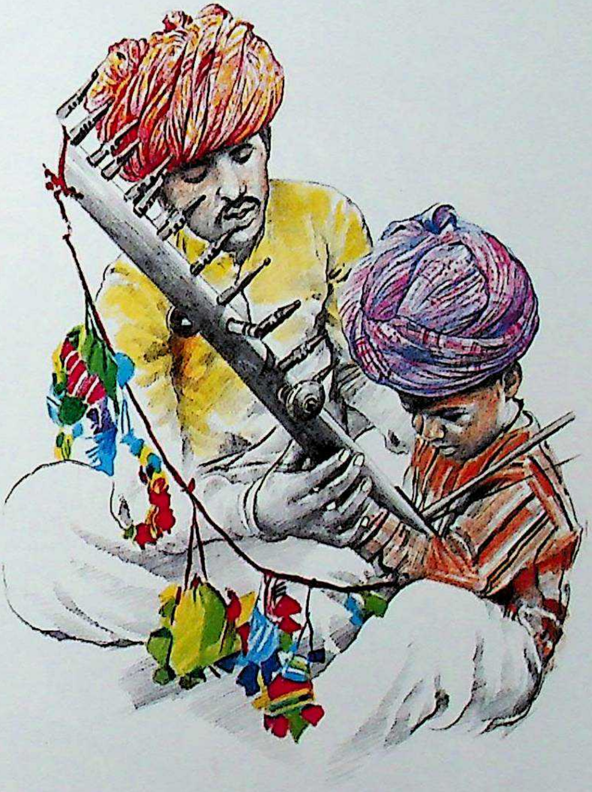
in the cycle called the "Khali" which starts an increasing tension which reaches a climax once again at the "Sam". Like a disembodied heart the Tala squeezes to the "Sam" and releases to the "Khali". On and on the squeezing and the releasing go in the song until at the end of the song this heart ceases to beat. This fundamental and vital distinction between Tala and rhythm is so basic to the understanding of Indian classical music that without a strong linguistic foundation it is almost impossible to grasp the meaning of Tala. For example the nuance of meaning of the text of a composition is bound up with the Tala on which the composition is itself structured. As a consequence there is nothing in learning the Tala independently of the linguistic traditions of which songs are composed. Poetry is the foundation of Tala. Any other way of learning Tala outside the cadence of language makes it mechanical and Tala but becomes rhythm. Some of the finest tabla and Pakhawaj players are also intensely part of the literary and poetic traditions in their language and as a consequence become more than mere beaters of drums or the keepers of time. Tala is more



A Pakhawaj player.

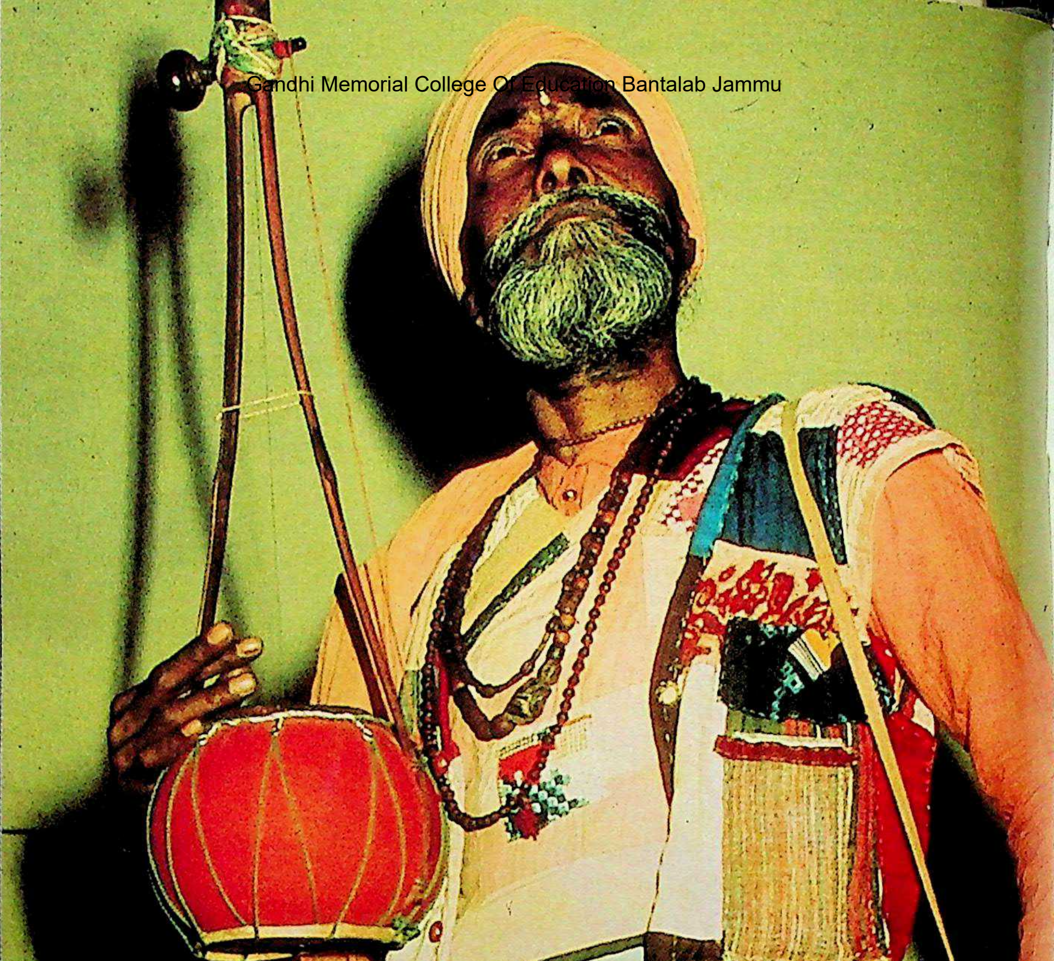
than keeping time. It is Tala that probes the inner tissues of language revealing subtle layers of meaning and opening windows to endless beatitudes. Since very few musicians themselves possess anything more than the barest literacy in their languages, most of the impact of Tala remains inert and dead within the measures. Little more than rhythm then becomes obvious and the difference then is the same as that between a limerick and a poem, between Robert Frost and Edward Lear.

REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS



Traditional baladeers from Rajasthan.

It is not difficult to imagine that there will be a certain element of regional differences in Indian classical music. Since Indian music, whether classical, light or folk, is based on the human voice and is built on the building bricks of swara and not on the western notes, its substance becomes essentially a matter of language. The same principle of Raga that animates



The wandering minstrel of Bengal - the Baul singers. They sing songs accompanied by a single - string instrument, the 'Ektara'.

the universe of Indian classical music gets costumed differently in each major language of the subcontinent. The pivotal difference between the sounds of language as distinguished from its words, their meanings and its grammatical structure are its tones and enunciation. It is in their tones and enunciation that regional differences of Indian classical music are clearly distinguishable and with tones and enunciation,voices go hand in hand.

Several varieties of voices have developed in Indian classical music attributable to the regional differences of languages, over the years. There is for example a kind of voice that can be called The West Coast voice, characterised by Maharashtra and its coast and those regions of Karnataka that lie along and around it. It is possible to identify a Bengal voice characterized by the language of the region and exemplified by the Bauls, the riverine Bhatialis and the Kirtans that are sung by those immersed in the Bhakti of Goddess and Krishna. There is something called the Punjab voice, the wide open spaces of the Heer and the subdued piety of the Shabads is also part of the language of the region. There has been an effort recently to call the music of the state of Orissa as a distinctive branch of Hindustani classical music. And in so far as the Odissi language is a full-fledged language in its own right, that Hindustani classical music could begin to manifest certain Odissi characteristics is not to be ruled out. In fact the music of Odissi has a strong Odissi linguistic and tonal characteristic, that can be identified without any difficulty. The powerful presence of the Jagannath at Puri, the temple that overshadows all the life and concerns of the state of Orissa, is included in this approach.

Depending upon the characteristics of these languages all of whom possess the unmistakable shadow of their region and the underlying drone of Sanskrit, behind and beneath them, the regional tones and enunciations produce the specific feeling of their sound and meaning. All these languages enrich the substance of the music of the Raga from varying directions of space and time and produce an internal validity that only life can endorse and exemplify.

A musical tradition of force and impact is not born from regional loyalties however deep and passionate. In fact any

M.S. Subbulakshmi , one of the greatest exponents of Carnatic music.

great religious intensity and of palpable musicianship of striking power and technical accomplishments.

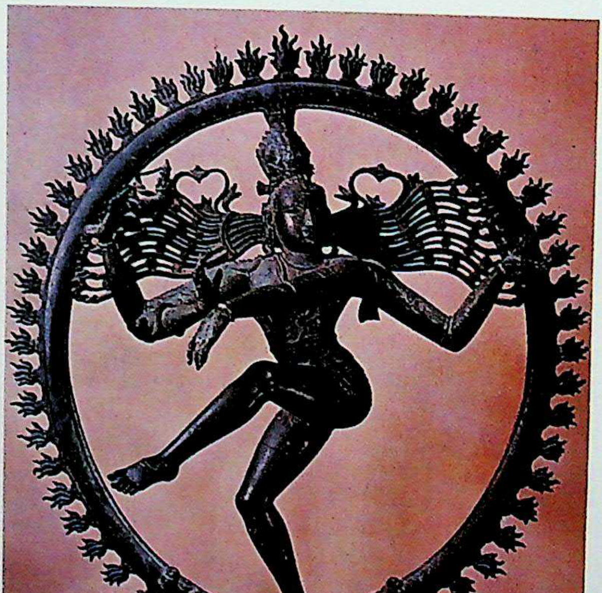
These composers took the Ragas of the Indian inheritance and created compositions of magical beauty and impact. In these compositions every detail of each Raga's feeling was incorporated and these compositions became the edifices which grew into becoming the musical equivalents of the looming Gopurams and enclosed piazzas of the massive temples of the South. Composers like Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri became the major three who were together named the Trinity and with them came a variety of other composers like Swati Tiruṇal and Kshetragnya and several more. The luminous musings of these powerful men of piety and resolve built the substance of Carnatic music over the generations, exemplified by a single and undivided approach to Raga and music.

Since the compositions of these masters were meant to last both as music and as poetry, the compositions were meticulously calibrated right down to each Matra of the Tala cycle almost letter to letter in each composition of a lyric. This technique made it difficult for any singer to restate the musical phrases contained in these compositions in personal and free terms. This kind of highly calibrated inheritance helped the music to standardize Bhavas through rigid swara geometries called Gamakas so that there was no way of bringing into music non-religious Bhakti of the mystic kind.

In this sense the Carnatic tradition has certain similarities to the psychological approach of the West to music. There too, the composer is the source of classical music and the calibration if anything is even more specific than in Carnatic music where the voice-based Swara is able to liberate a musician to his own search. Since both the styles are Raga based, neither has found it necessary to look at a tempered scale except idly in playful moments. In the result the Carnatic tradition is more legible in Western terms. Since there are rules which are rigidly observed and compositions that can be taught from a score and learned as you would Ave Maria or The Stars and Stripes. Its rules can be identified without the powerful sanction of personal mediation. The Tala of Carnatic music rules the interstices of all its statements in syllabic terms and its feeling is unbendingly religious filled with piety and petition.

THE CLASSICAL DANCE FORMS OF INDIA

LEELA SAMSON



Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. Dravidian Bronze,12th to 13th century.

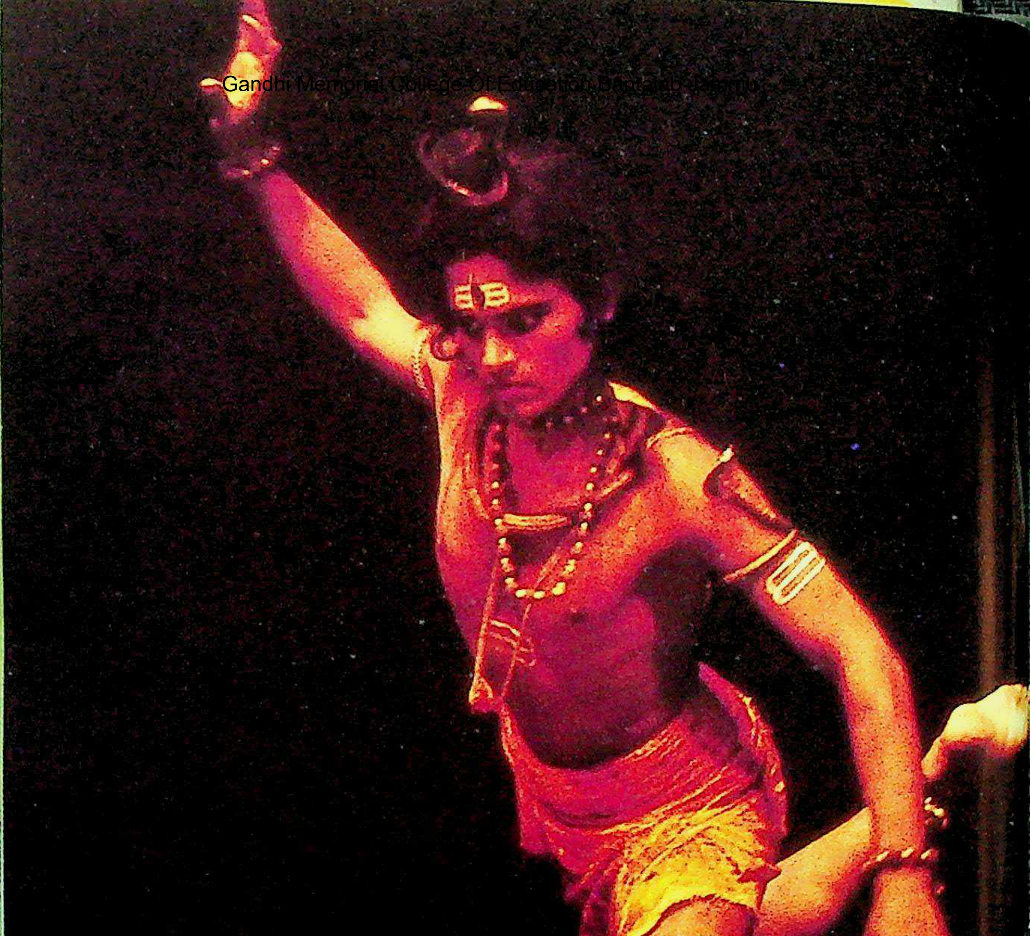
LEELA SAMSON — A product of Kalakshetra, Leela Samson had a thorough grooming in Bharat Natyam under the direct supervision of Rukmini Devi for more than a decade. She also taught there and was a member of Kalakshetra Repertory Company. She has toured much around the world as a soloist since. A graduate of Delhi University she lives in Delhi. She is also a prolific writer of dance and dance-related matters and has been a recipient of the Sanskrit Foundation Award and Padmashree.

THE classical dance forms of India are based on age-old concepts of philosophy, myth, social norms and behaviour. The styles truly reflect the people. They translate their beliefs into form, their poetry into a language of gesture and their innermost feelings into the manifold expression of the eyes. The styles, which represent the different parts of the country from where they originate, typify these particular areas in language, dress, ornamentation, musical form, instruments and social customs. They, however, grow out of that particular region in the broader perspective of religious belief and the older concepts of dance technique as handed down by the gods.

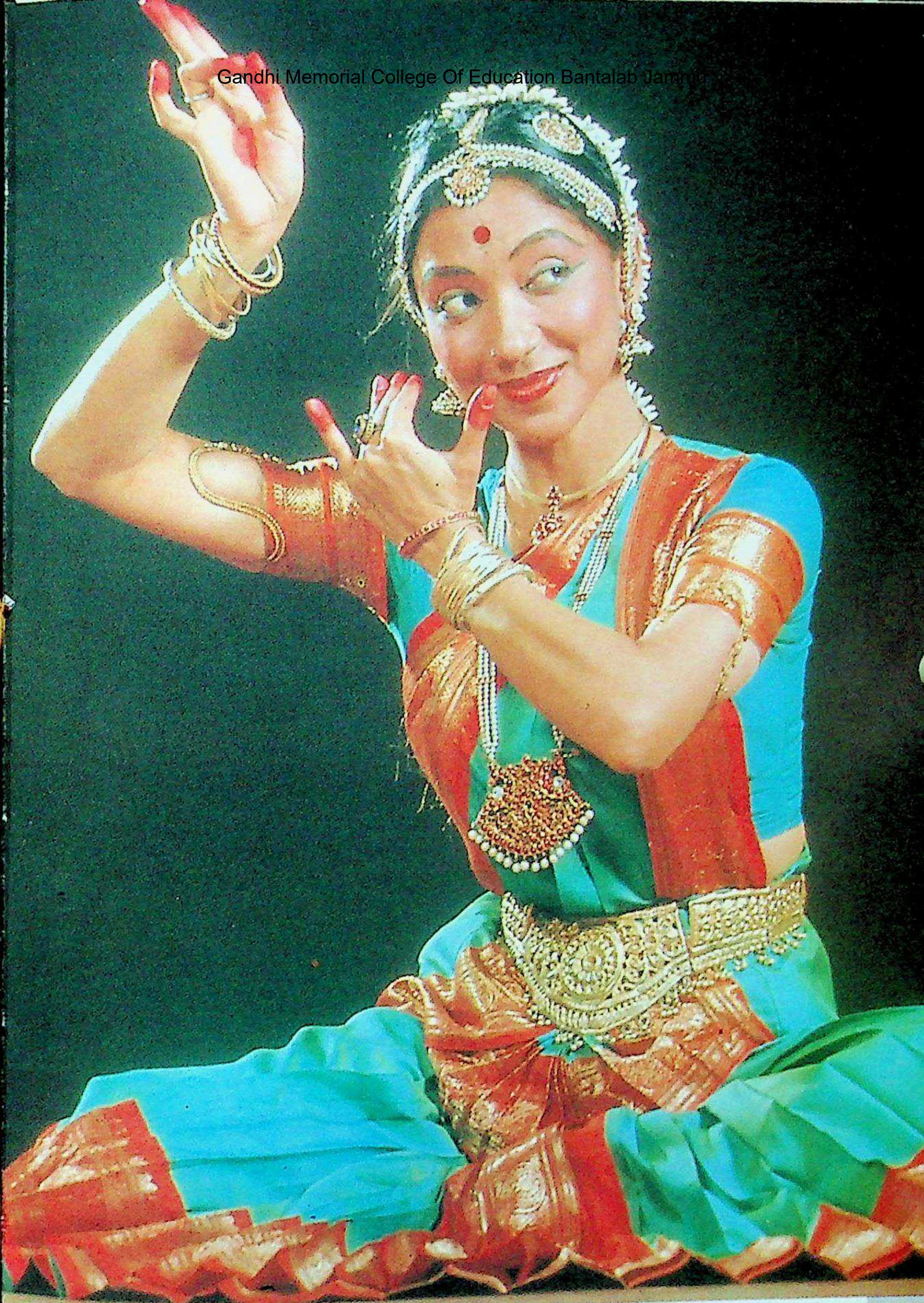
There are six major dance styles in India. Besides, there are several offshoots of these which have gained in prominence and popularity in the past decade — thereby enhancing their stature on the pan-Indian dance scene. There are several dance-drama forms, very ancient in origin and extremely popular in the vernacular. Besides, there are a host of folkdances from every state and sub-division of a state, originating in villages and danced by the people on festive occasions. These last may even be ritualistic in nature, thereby forming a link between their presentation and that of the highly stylized and sophisticated major classical dance streams of the country.

Shiva, the Supreme God, the destroyer and Lord of Yogis, says of himself in the Karma Purana, "I am the originator, the god abiding in supreme bliss, I, the yogi, dance eternally." Having said this, he danced, showing his formidable and supreme reality. Shiva, the god of dance, activates the universe and liberates his devotees from ignorance. His celestial dance is said to have been witnessed by the sages (with the cosmos as his stage). Numerous bronze and stone images of this dance —the 'tandava' of Shiva demonstrate the vertical axis of the god's body and his movement around this axis in balanced poise. The whole is encircled by flames, each hand and foot representing his five-fold action of creation, preservation, dissolution, veiling-unveiling and liberation.

Shiva's 'tandava' represents the energetic masculine-like movements of the dance forms. His consort, Parvati, is said to have handed down the more feminine or graceful aspect of dance. These combine to lend strength and vigour on the one



Shiva Tandava in Mayurbhanj Chhau.



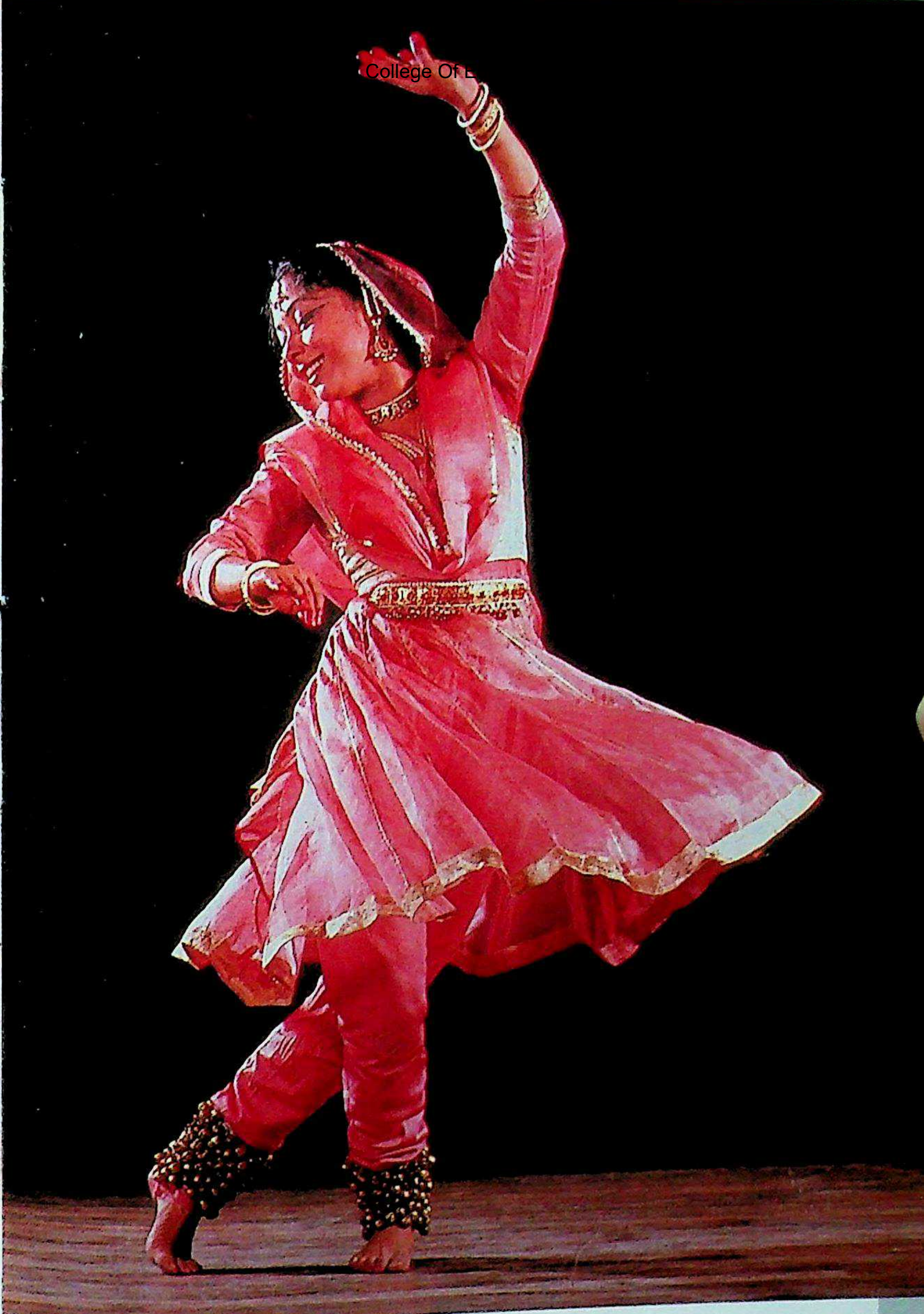
Leela Samson,an exponent of Bharata Natyam the oldest dance form of India.

Light foot-work, and poetic charm adorn the colourful dance of Manipuri.

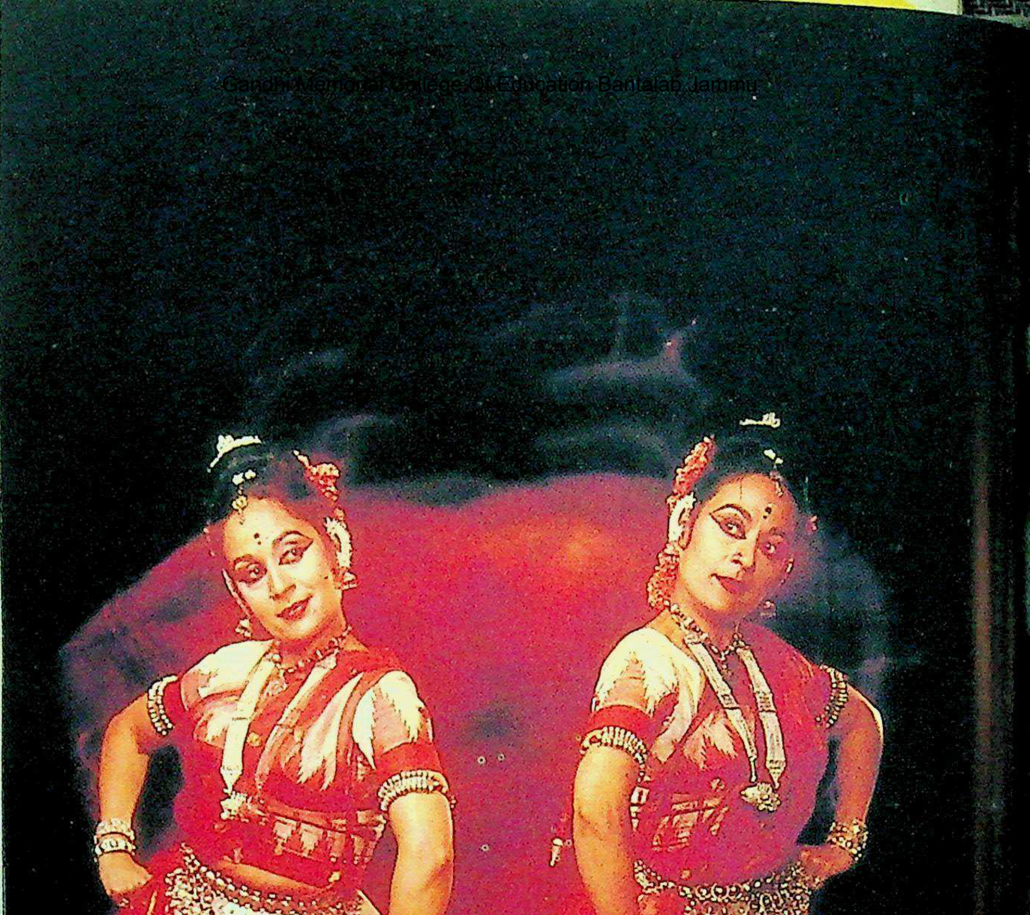
hand, to grace and subtlety on the other. Every classical dance idiom in India embodies these two aspects, not always clearly demarcated but merging into each other, as the male and female natures in man.

The Natya Shastra, attributed to the sage Bharata and dated around the 2nd century AD, is a treatise dealing with the arts of drama and dance. All the Indian classical dance forms acknowledge this text as a theoretical base upon which local technique designs itself. Apart from this text, there are several other texts in the vernacular languages and concentrating upon particular regional dance forms.

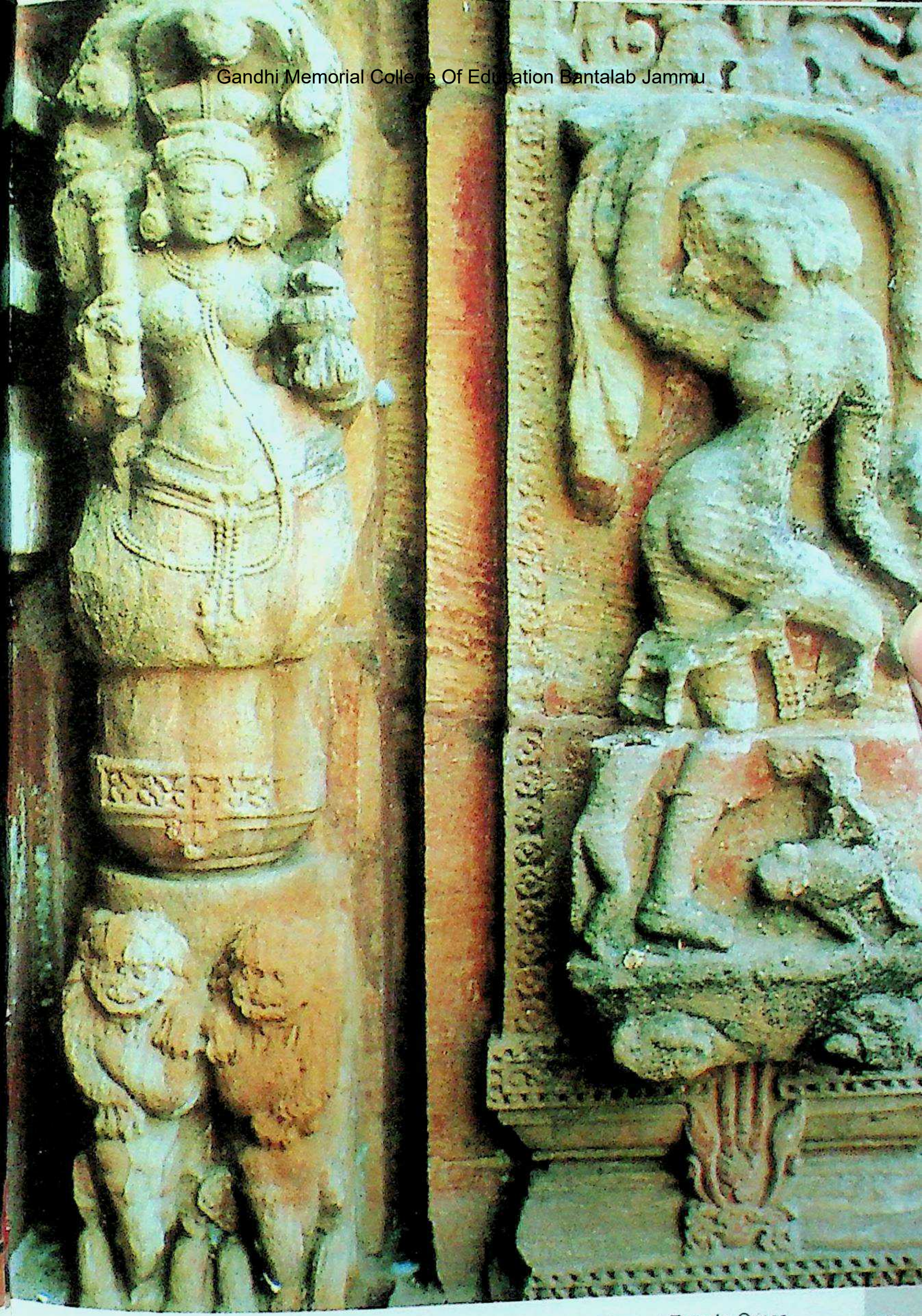
'Nritta' and 'nrittya' are the two aspects of Indian dance forms. The former is defined as pure dance — movements of the body co-ordinated with gestures of the hands. These movements include static positions or 'sthanakas', also called 'mandalas'; jumps or 'plavana's'; turns or 'brahmaris' and gaits or manners of moving called 'pada charis'. Nritta thus expresses



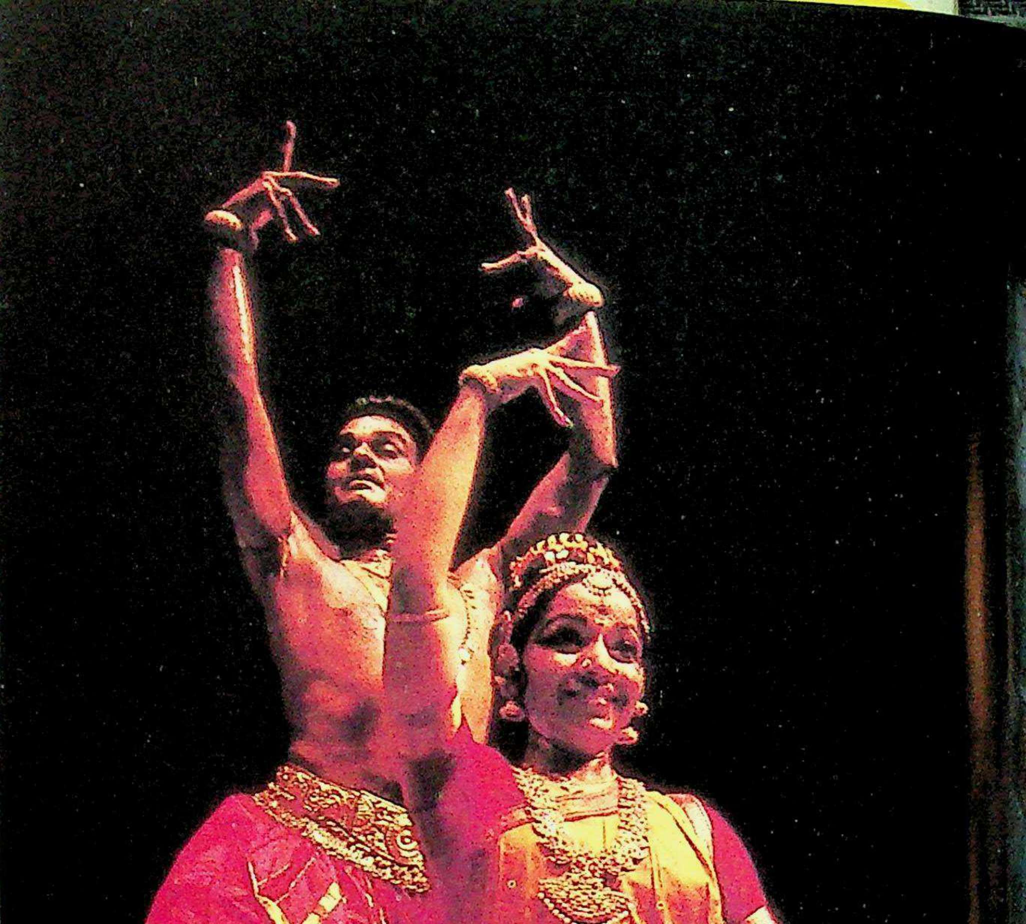
Saswati Sen performing Kathak,the classical dance form of North India, intricate in its footwork, with rhythmic syllables and instrumental music.



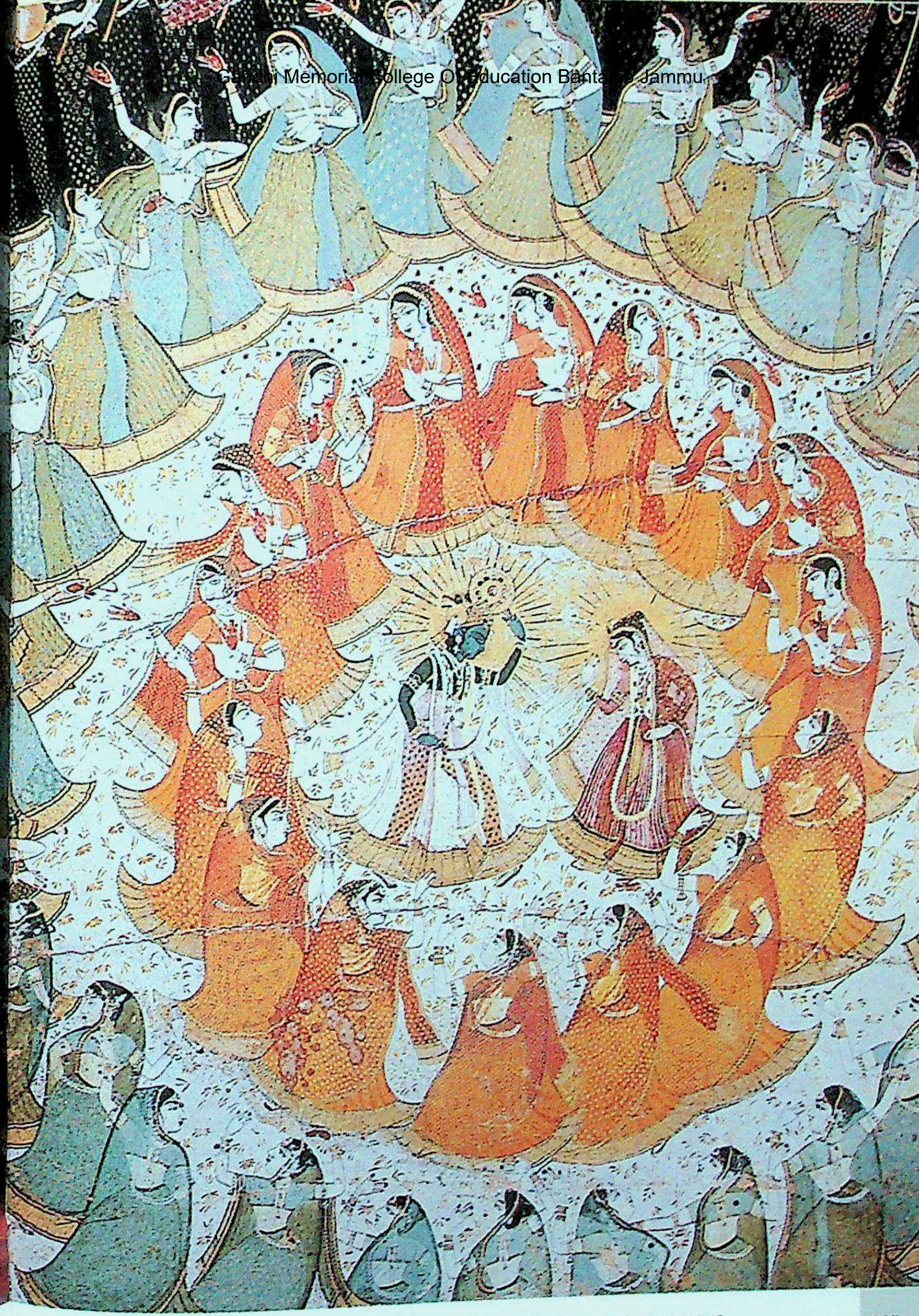
Sonal Mansingh performing Odissi, an intensely sensuous and sculpturesque form of dance from Orissa.



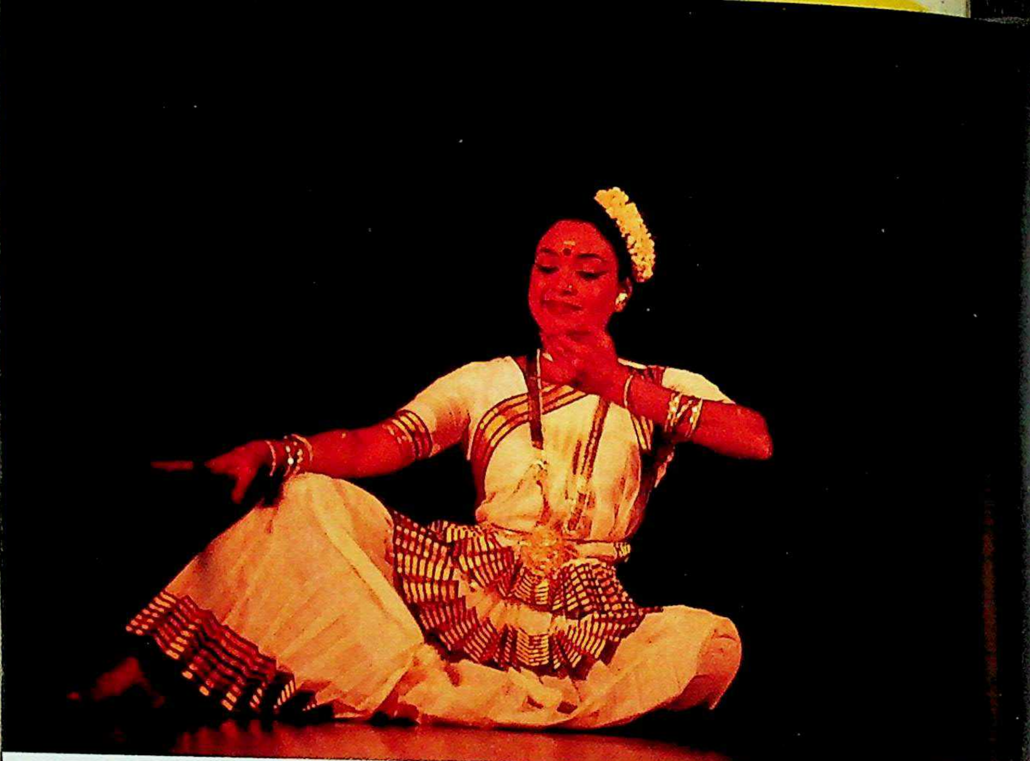
"Alasa Kanya", an exquisite dance sculpture on the walls of the Konarak Temple, Orissa.



Radha and Raja Reddy performing Kuchipuddi. A dance-drama from Andhra Pradesh in which music and dance form an integral part of the 'abhinay'.



Lord Krishna's cosmic dance (Rasamandala).Jaipur, late 18th century, opaque watercolour. Legends of Radha and Krishna are a common theme for most of the Indian dance forms.



Above : Bharati Shivaji performing Mohini Attam from Kerala. Named after the mythological beauty 'Mohini', this dance is a synthesis of Kathakali, Bharata Natyam and a few folk dances. Below : Kathakali or dance play culminating from religious, folk and classical dance-drama traditions of Kerala.

the joy of movement and is intended to be "a thing of beauty", wherein the creation of line or form within the pattern of rhythmic cycles, creates exciting visuals for the beholder.

'Nrittya', the second aspect, is a combination of both pure dance and expressional or interpretive dance. This latter is not mime. It is not an imitation of human behaviour. It is an 'expression' of it. Verse sung by the musicians accompanies this dance and a varied use of hasta-mudras or hand gestures convey the different meanings intended by the dancer. All 'abhinaya' or expression may be either tokadharmi (realistic) or 'natya-dharmi' (stylised). In the solo dance forms the 'natyadharmi' convention is preferred. 'Shringara' or the erotic sentiment is a predominant mood in the dance forms and apart from the dramatic presentations of epic tales, the 'nayika-bhav' or heroine-based situations are seen most often on stage. The heroine prisms life around her and all feelings flow through her.

The major classical dance forms in India are Bharata-Natyam, Odissi, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, Kathak and Mohini-Attam. These share certain basic technical modes of expression, a common Hindu background and are commonly linked by the myth of the land and the philosophical interpretation of it.

Bharata Natyam originated in the land of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It has a temple background. This is because the art was preserved by the temples and the dance, primarily devotional in nature, meant as an offering to the gods. Bharata Natyam is a dynamic and precise dance art. A variety of movements with composed and extended lines project an equal measure of beauty and strength. Different 'schools' of Bharata-Natyam exist and one can see some differences in the delineation of similar movements. These streams go back to the different villages and districts from where a single family inherited and imparted the secrets of the style.

Manipuri is the graceful art form of the mountain people of Manipur. Myth and devotion translate themselves into the ritual performances of men, women and children. Even the kings and queens of this land were traditionally adept in dance and music. The 'lai haraoba' is a long and elaborate enactment of the process of creation and the 'sankirtan', a manifestation of God 'Hari' or Krishna, is praised through the night-long performance. The 'raas-lila' is a parallel tradition that also recreates the deeds of Krishna. The Manipuri style is never aggressive, but tender and reticent. Cymbals and drums are used in the dance by the male dancer and their costumes are simple and elegant.

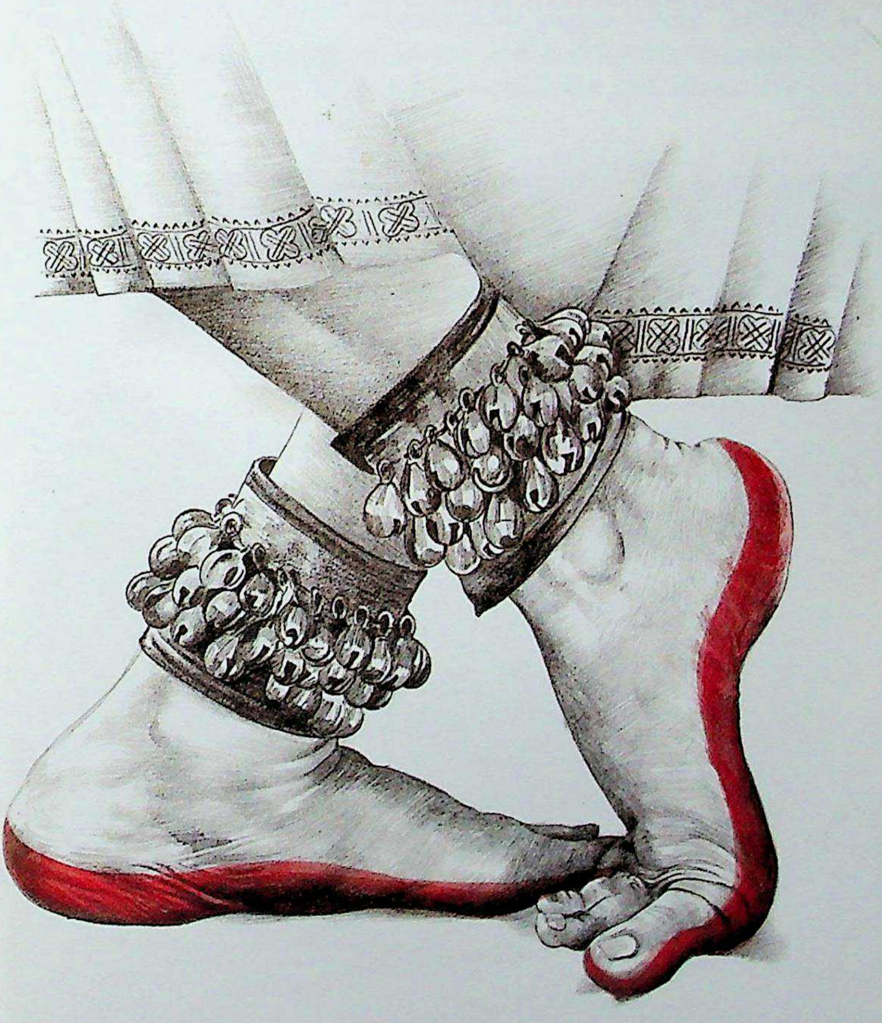
Kathak is the exuberant style of the dancers of North India, originating in the Lucknow and Jaipur gharanas. The dancer is a story-teller and Kathak is the only dance-form in India which, although devotional in nature, emphasizes the quality of entertainment. The dancer addresses herself directly to the audience, explaining the presentation or the intricacies of it. Pure dance is a predominant aspect with pirouettes forming a striking difference to other Indian dance forms.

Odissi evolved in the ambience of the temples of Orissa. It is a lyrical and subtle style from the east coast of India and as such several streams of influence, both historical and cultural, affected it. Odissi has an unusual charm and a great harmony of line and lyric. It is visibly 'sculpturesque' and reflects stone carvings of the temple of the Sun — Konarak.

Kathakali is the vivid, male dance-drama form of the fertile State of Kerala. It dates back to the 17th century, has martial techniques and is rigorous in nature. It is the most histrionic art practised in India — explicit and humorous — elements not seen in the other classical forms. The men take on female roles, wear elaborate costumes, use intricate make-up techniques and roar like lions on stage, if the role demands it. Artistes of great stature emerge from this discipline.

The variety of expression in body and facial movement provided by our art forms have not been fully appreciated the world over. It is a labyrinth of treasure, moulded by decades of artistic and devotional endeavour categorized and formulated on strict technical structures and supported by a volume of philosophy, literature and music.

When the body, heart and mind are poised in a single expression of involved beauty, the artiste can truly be said to be in 'meditation'. All action ceases into inaction, and as it were, and the inner self, unconscious in the act of beauty, makes technique slave to both the artist and his art.



The feet of the Indian dancer are often decorated with red 'alta' or henna and the ankles adorned with small bells — 'ghungru', to make the stamping dance movements more conspicuous, both to the eye and to the ears.

BOMBAY CINEMA

KHALID MOHAMED

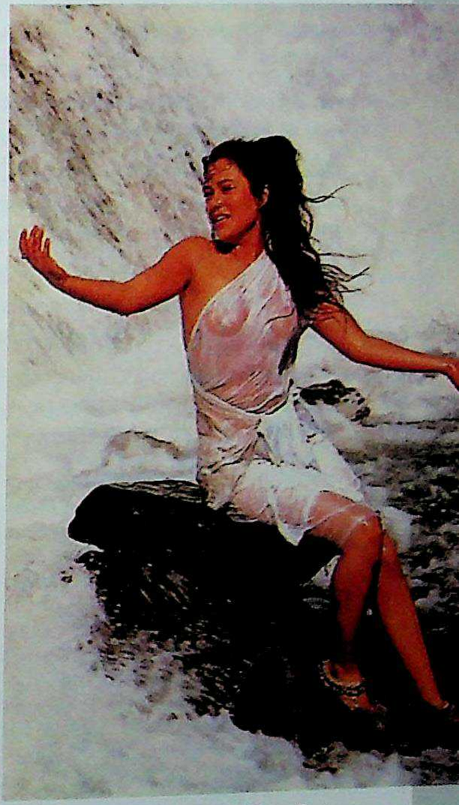
Boney Kapoor's magnum production, "Roop Ki Rani, Choron Ka Raja."

KHALID MOHAMED was born in 1955. An M.A. in Political Science, he is a film critic and media editor of The Times of India. He is also the consulting editor of Filmfare. He has worked for the T.V. medium with movie star profiles for the written channels for Doordarshan and Video magazines. He has edited two special issues on Film Directors and Film Stars for the National Film Development Corporation.

POODLES fall at her feet, their pink bows akimbo. A Contessa with chintzy curtains pulls up on the driveway. She throws a cascade of Chiclets into her mouth. Chewing them furiously, she's on the road to Film City, a suburban stretch of Bombay with papier mâché boulders, a helipad with a vibgyor tarmac and a thousand fountains that throw up sherbet instead of water. For the starlet, it's just another day at the studio.

On the set, she is sprayed with water so that her thin white sari clings to her body. The Indian censor board detests nudity but clothed titillation is all right. The producer surveying the scene shifts to his office, answers phone calls desultorily, looks forward to an evening in the company of Johnnie Walker (Black Label), never mind if it is spurious. His "supplier" has ensured him that the crate of Johnnie comes straight from Dubai duty-free. So why cavil?

In the health-clubs of five-star hotels, teenybopper brats tone their muscles. Body language is in, conversation is out. Sullen, like angst-ridden cowboys they ride into the camera range after a workout with dumbbells. The reigning superstar is on a sabbatical, mulling over the twist in his career plot. At 50, he's going on 20 up there on the screen. Dorian Gray no longer sells. He reflects, therefore, on the complicated chore of an image-switch. He has to play daddy-o in the movies. But will the audiences so used to seeing him as the invincible master blaster accept him with a powdered wig? More silent than an empty church, he muses on in his den strewn with ethnic dhurries.



Mandakini in Raj Kapoor's "Ram Teri Ganga Maili."

But life's hardly serene behind the scenes of Bombay's booming cinema. The daily whirl is dizzying. Here, badshahs of the tinsel trade hack out extravaganzas of love and despair, of modern-day Lailas lisping over morose Majnus. There are shoot-outs, cliff-hanger fistbouts, suicides by the sunset and Rambo-like killing machines who can knock the great big audience out there in the dank cinema halls, cold dead.

The evolution of Indian cinema — or Bombay's Hindi cinema since it sets the patterns and trends for films in other parts of the entertainment-obsessed country — has been a source of constant amazement to the rest of the world. Not only in terms of sheer quantity but also because of its steadfast grip on the national mind, the enormous stock of films produced here have aroused acrimonious debates on their sociological value or the lack of it. Recent years have even witnessed the prevalence of the cult of violence in the movies, balanced mercifully to an extent by the success of a series of romantic, Romeo and Juliet-style capers.

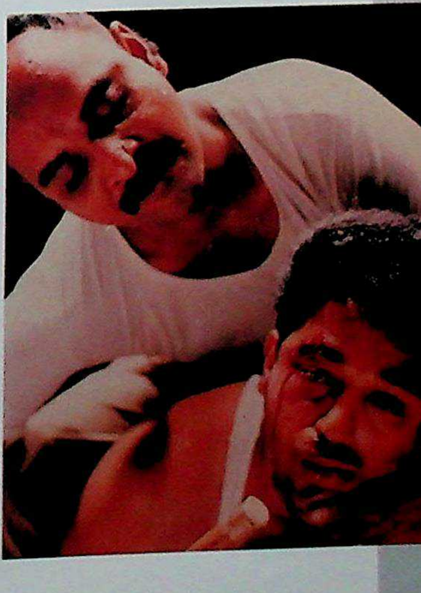
Thematically, cinema would even seem to be working at cross-purposes. While glorifying violence, it is contradictorily elevating romance, emotional interplay and sentimentality to a lofty pedestal. But then, it has to be remembered perhaps that

KHALNAYAK
इज़्ज़त की रोटी
IZZAT ki ROTI

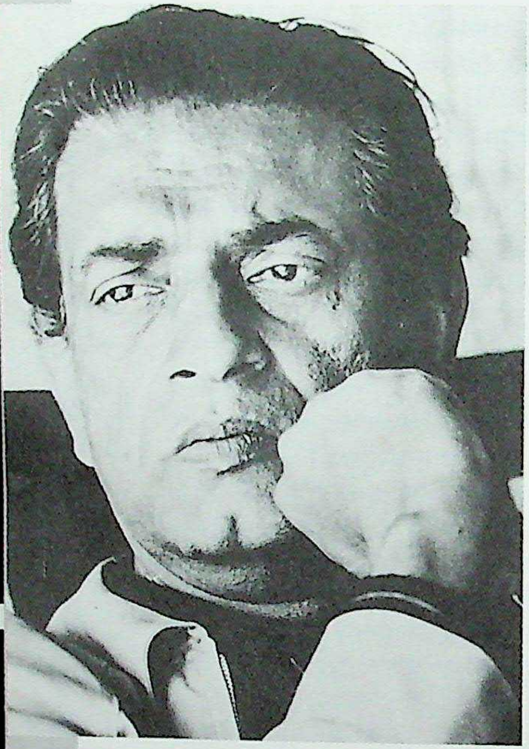
through the entire course of talkie cinema's 60-year-old span, the scenario has been eclectic. Ever since the release of the mythological fantasy, "Alam Ara" (1931), film-makers, ladling out sound and fury, have not concentrated on any one genre at any given point of time. Action adventures, tear jerkers, murder mysteries, thrillers, family and costume dramas, curry westerns, comedies and tragedies have co-existed successfully in a bid to satisfy every need of India's vast and variegated population. A film can cost anything from Rs 50 lakhs ($ 5 million) to Rs 3 crores ($30 million). Not surprisingly, cinema is an industry that has often been called the dream factory.

Every Indian film must be packed with song and dance interludes since these ingredients have come to be accepted as a mandatory part of the formula. Some films may even have a dozen songs and in fact, uncannily resemble the Busby Berkely musicals of Hollywood. The film marquee boasts of more stars than in heaven — like pop idols in the West, movie stars become national gods and goddesses. Every film stretches to a running time of nearly three hours in an attempt to give the viewer full value for their time and money.

The annual output of 800 Indian films on an average makes for the cheapest form of entertainment for an audience craving escape from their immediate environment. Cinema is certainly more affordable than an evening at the theatre. The national film production rate is the highest in the world, surpassing that of America and Japan. Moreover, no new phenomena can crush it. Video, television, cable and satellite have not dealt any knockout blows yet to the box-office collections.



Kamal Hassan in Mani Ratnam's 'Nayyakan'.



Satyajit Ray, acclaimed the world over as a director of outstanding films.

Lata Mangeshkar : The melody queen of the Indian film world.

Guru Dutt and Madhubala in "Mr. & Mrs. 55."

Indian cinema creates its own special brand of escapism. Each film must have a huger-than-life hero, a simpering heroine, an incorrigible villain and a saintly, ever-suffering mother. Good must always triumph over evil. The songs must carrom between the moods of jazzy jubilation and profound sorrow. There must be flashy technique, moments of catharsis in the stories normally scripted piecemeal minutes before the camera is ready to roll and then, sweet relief. It is this recipe that feeds the aspirations and anxieties of the sub-continent's people.

Lately, the Tamil film production centre of Madras has been giving Bombay a run for its money. Its young set of directors like Mani Rathnam have achieved a technical, Spielbergian kind of sheen for their films. Besides Bombay in Maharashtra and Madras in Tamil Nadu, the other leading production centres are Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Bangalore (Karnataka), Ahmedabad (Gujarat) and Calcutta (Bengal), each catering to the language, dialect and temperament of the region. Of the annual production, the highest tallies are in Bombay, Madras and Hyderabad, with each region

Nargis, Raj Kapoor and Dilip Kumar in Mehboob Khan's 'Andaz' 1949 (Left to Right).

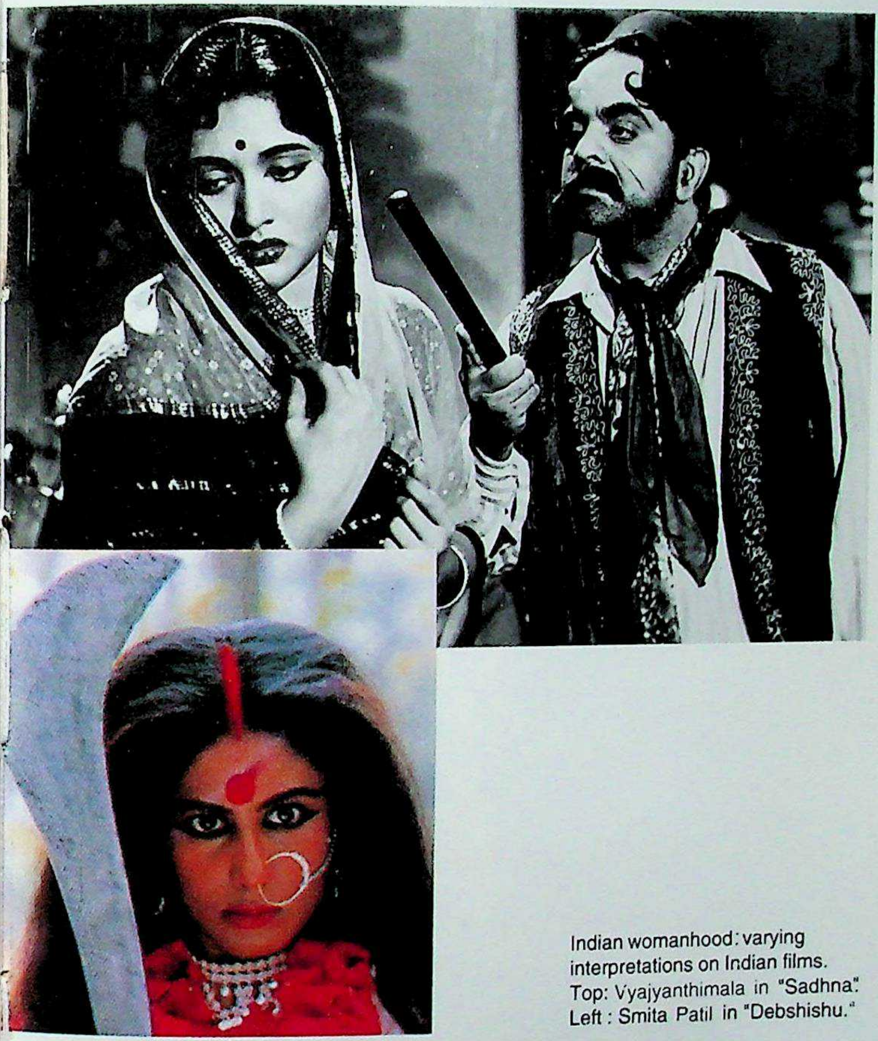
releasing two to three new films every week. Although Bengal may not be as prolific, it is on the international film map for the work of its celebrated directors, notably the late Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and the late Ritwik Ghatak.

There is a dark side to the tinsel moon. Trade pundits state that only 10 per cent of the films recover their investment while only 2 per cent make bonanza profits. Movie moguls also often bemoan the governmental pressures and indefatigably lobby for concessions in levies, taxes and raw stock prices. Their grievances are redressed rarely.

The overall profit-and-loss chart of Indian films may be bleak. But the show does go on. After all, there is a hungry audience of 10 million spectators. Film-making may be one of the riskiest businesses in the country today (investing in real estate is far safer) but like gamblers, dream merchants remain addicted to their trade. If the film is a major hit — everyone dreams of breaking the records of the top-grossers of all time, "Sholay" and "Maine Pyar Kiya" — then there's enough money to keep three generations in the gravy.

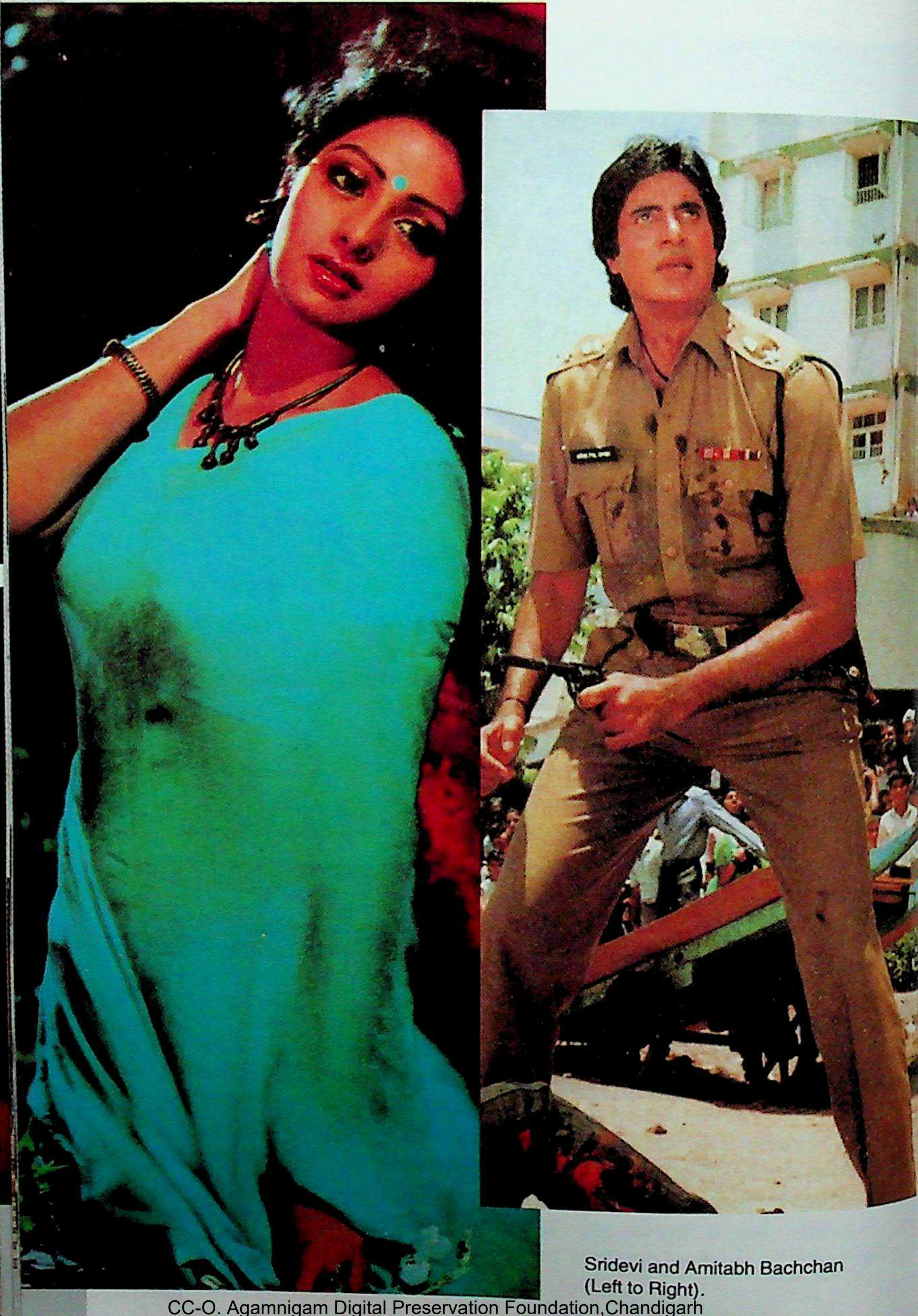
To a degree, show business is a family affair. The R.K. studio owned by the late showman, Raj Kapoor, is an open-air expanse dotted with barn-like structures which can be transformed by an art director into a palace or a palladium. Raj Kapoor lived in a magnificent all-white villa behind the studio and modestly called it his "cottage". Son of the theatre thespian, Prithviraj, Raj Kapoor's sons — Randhir, Rishi and Rajiv — have kept the R.K. banner flying with last year's well-liked "Henna". The showman's brothers, Shammi and Shashi, have been national dream-boats, too, and the R.K. clan has been associated with cinema. The new entrant into the world of film glamour from the family is Raj Kapoor's grand daughter, Karisma.

In a bungalow cut off by sky-high gates, resides Ramanand Sagar, spinner of quaint romances now identified with tele-epics "Ramayan" and "Krishna". His sons handle the more mundane tasks of office-keeping while at a ten-minute walking distance, B.R. Chopra works on feature film scripts and tele-sagas with son Ravi. While their films receive a drubbing at the turnstiles, their TV opus "Mahabharat" has a captive audience in India and is followed by immigrant Indians on London telly. Shakti Samanta, A. G. Nadiadwalla, G. P. Sippy and Nasir Husain



Indian womanhood: varying interpretations on Indian films.
Top: Vyajyanthimala in "Sadhna".
Left : Smita Patil in "Debshishu."

operate from their chintzy offices, with their sons following their métier. To them the blazing arc-lights, the porridge-like tea brewed in the backrooms, the portraits of deities and the scent of joss-sticks are part of a hallowed universe. Often, a new film-maker crashes into this El Dorado only after he has stinted for years as an assistant and has won the confidence of the families. Once he has a hit, he goes solo, encourages his own progeny to join the profession, and the cycle continues.

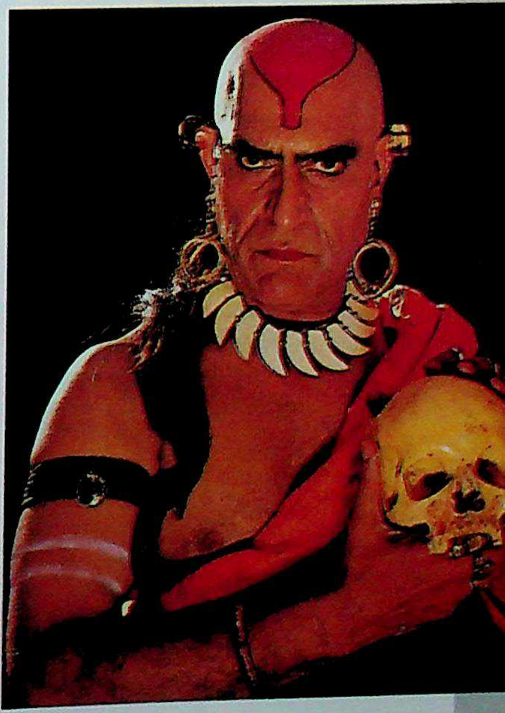


Sridevi and Amitabh Bachchan (Left to Right).

Moviefolk are extra-superstitious; they often reiterate, "We are God-fearing." Elaborate mahurats with prayers are conducted to launch a new production. Coconut cubes sprinkled with sugar are distributed on the sets on the completion of the first shot every morning. Stacks of reels of the finished films are even carried to distant pilgrimage spots and the theatres are strung out with auspicious marigold garlands on the evening of a film's premiere.

The homes of the most in-demand stars, producers, directors and music composers are 'designer', from the gilt-edged telephones to the Elizabethan furniture picked up from Chor Bazaar by hawk-eyed interior decorators. The aim is to be as opulent as possible as an ultra-luxurious lifestyle is expected of them. They squander money visibly for fear of being labelled 'kanjoos' (misers). Once their market starts declining, the chips in the chinaware displayed in drawing rooms start showing. If Hollywood has its Sunset Boulevard, Bombay has its own heartbreak streets — the outer suburbs where yesteryear's heart-throbs seek the cloak of anonymity. For them, the party is over.

The plots of the average Indian film are as predictable. The story patterns that are incomprehensible to the



Amrish Puri : Villain of the Hindi screen.

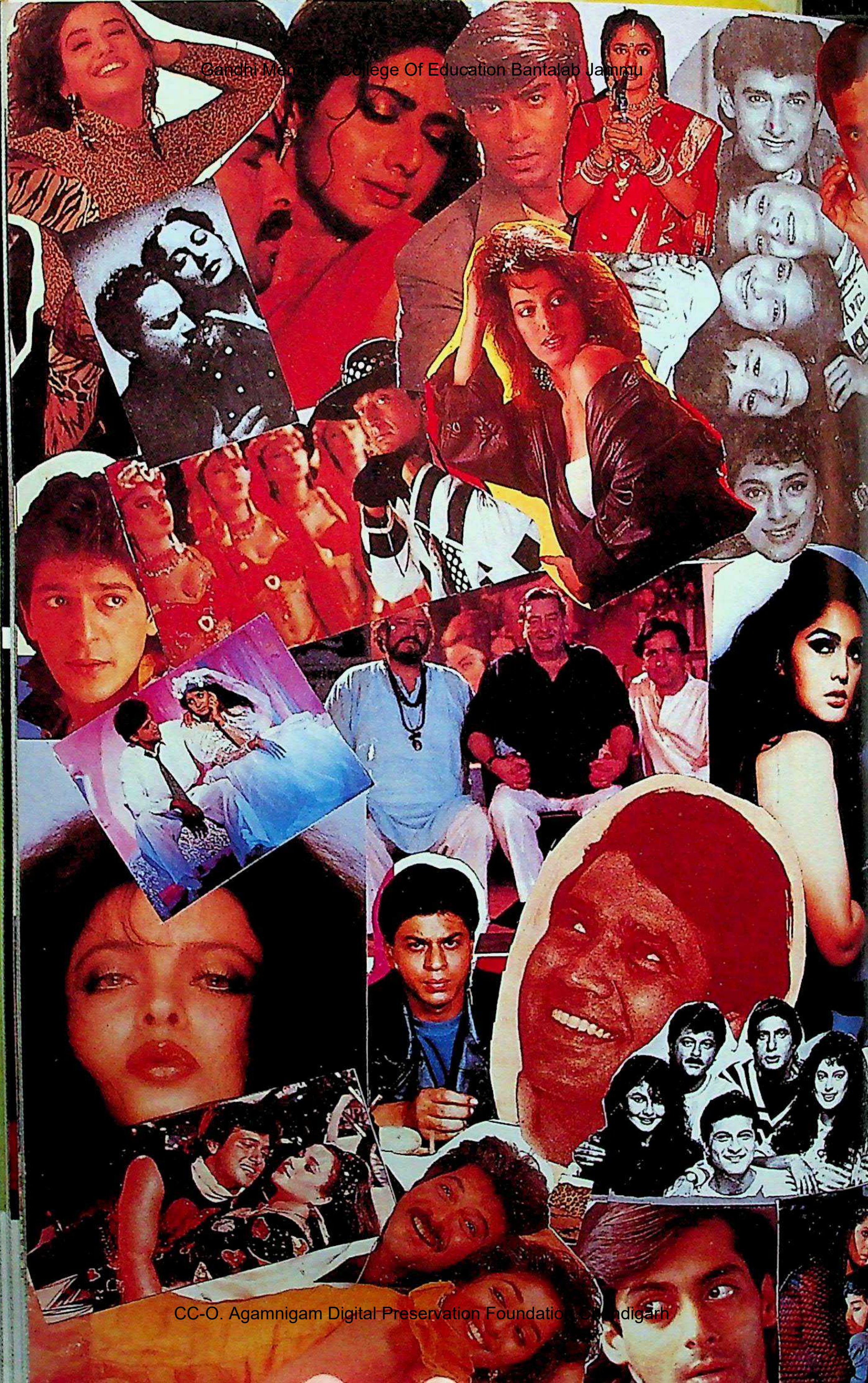
"Rudali", a film by Kalpana Lajmi, an NFDC production.

West were set from the start. The father of Indian Cinema, Dadasaheb Phalke, used the movie camera from 1913 to transcribe into images a treasure of stories based on Hindu mythology — stories that form not only a part of Indian culture but are enshrined in the hearts of the tradition-loving Indian people. Expectedly, the heroes often assume the qualities of Lord Krishna and the heroines those of his consort Radha.

Right down the '90s, the film is believed to be a synthesis of nine rasas (tastes) : the loved one, the heroic, the odious, the comic, the terrible, the marvellous, the furious, the pathetic and the peaceful. Such a menu also indicates why the Hindi film is often called the 'masala' film. It serves various spices to cater to different tastes.

The invincible Indian hero is epitomised by Amitabh Bachchan. He is the archetypal angry man (angry 'young' man when he started out on his career nearly three decades ago) who battles the Establishment. Frequently, the audience believes whatever absurd trick he performs, including miraculous recovery, in the film "Coolie", from a hundred bullets pumped

Above : Ramanand Sagar's epic serial 'Ramayana' Below : Rajshri Productions 'Maine Pyar Kiya' — a major box-office hit.



into his body. The logic is that he recovered from a near-fatal blow while performing a stunt scene; the entire nation prayed for him. Therefore, it is only natural that he should survive as a superman-on-screen.

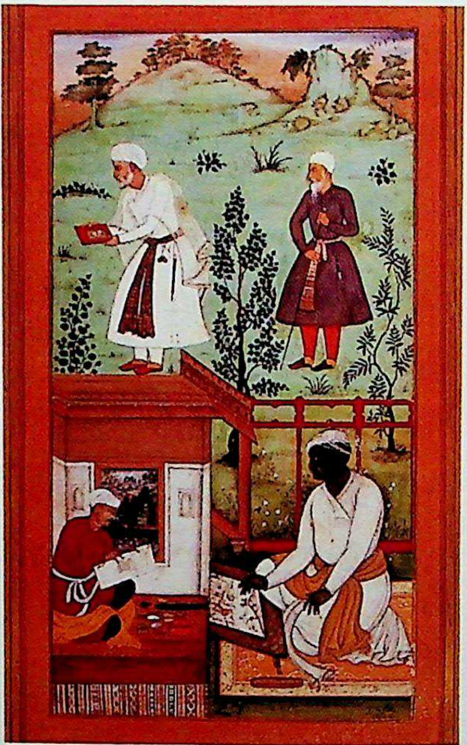
Actors command and get astounding fees. The first casualty of this is the budget of a film which goes awry because of the disproportionate fee paid to the leading man. By contrast, the actress is paid less than half the sum while the supporting players get even less. But the star-fees are believed to be a small price because it is the top actor of the day who draws the crowds in. Bachchan, who had a brief affair with politics,'is the highest-paid star. Among those who also receive staggering fees are the younger spunky lot led by Salman Khan, Aamir Khanand Ajay Devgan.

In the aggressively commercial market — one hit and you're ten feet tall, one flop and you don't exist — the meaningful, small-budget films that were making a dent in the market in the 1970s have all but disappeared. The new wave of films that didn't play to the gallery, which were experimental in form and serious in their content, have ebbed. These films touched upon taboo subjects like the exploitation of women, rural unrest, police corruption and governmental apathy. The urban audiences reacted positively, craved for material that dared to stray off the beaten track. However, they have been elbowed out of the market by the more gargantuan, glitzy entertainers — hopefully only temporarily. Highly regarded names such as Mani Kaul, Kumar Shahani, Govind Nihalani, Ketan Mehta, Shyam Benegal and Saeed Mirza have not given up. They are at work assiduously. After all, there is life beyond the mainstream.

As for those poodles with the pink bows, they are asleep by the time Ms Starlet returns home. She's wide awake at midnight. Because at the studio all day long, she performed her job as if she was in a trance. She has just come out of a dream.

INDIAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

KRISHNA CHAITANYA



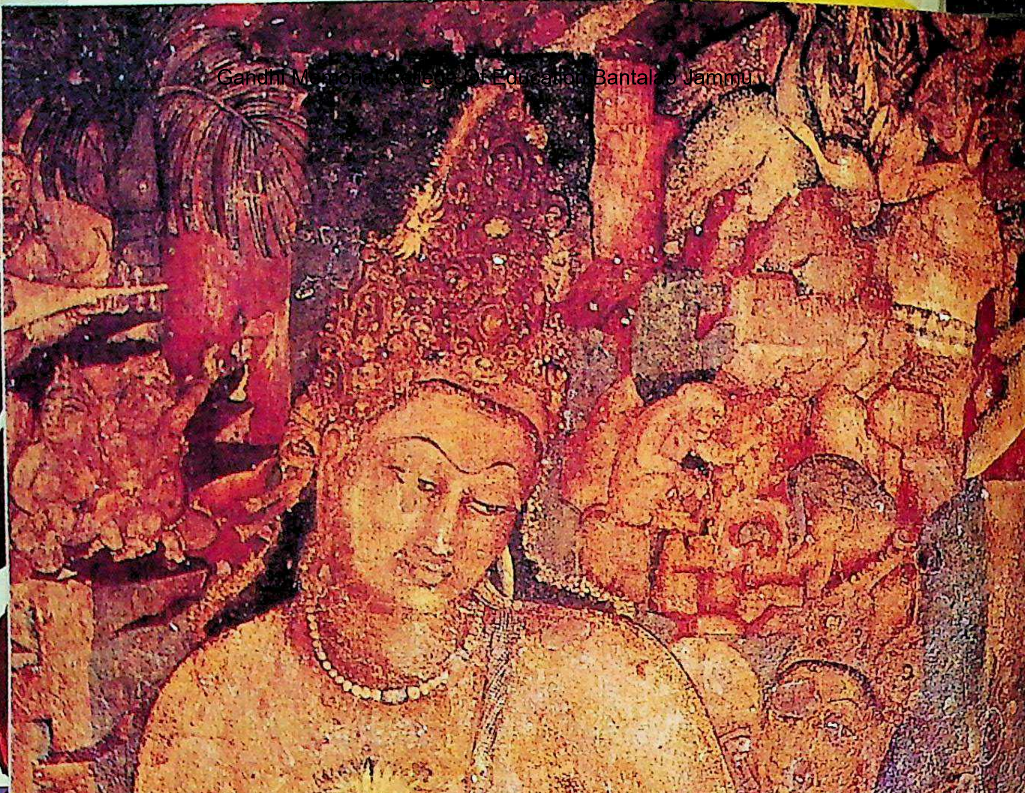
Artists at work, Mughal miniature. 1585 opaque watercolour on paper.

KRISHNA CHAITANYA is the author of about forty books on a wide range of subjects including a ten-volume History of World Literature and a five-volume Philosophy of Freedom. He got the Critic of Ideas award from the Institute of International Education, New York, in 1964, the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship in 1978, a D.Litt(Honoris Causa) from the Rabindra Bharati University in 1986 and the Padma Shri in 1992. He has been an art critic and columnist from 1948 and has written a four-volume History of Indian Painting besides monographs on several contemporary Indian artists.

LARGE galleries of Stone Age paintings going back to 15000 B C have been discovered in places like Altamira in Spain and Lascaux in France. The primitive paintings of India, earlier known, at Mirzapur, Hoshangabad and elsewhere, do not go so far back. But isolated communities can long maintain the mindset of the infancy of the race and therefore these paintings share the salient features of primitive art. The silhouette figures create a dramatic shadow-play of scenes of hunt, the open mouth of the mortally wounded boar expresses all its pain. Then in 1957 an extensive gallery was discovered in the caves of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. The earliest paintings here may reach back to the Stone Age, but the site continued to be used for painting right into historical times.

Only surmise is possible about painting in the epoch of the Indus Valley Civilization (3000-1500 B C) for, while the foundations of the surprisingly well-urbanised townships remain, the walls that may have had murals have entirely perished. But we find ceramic decoration reproducing mural painting in ancient Greece and it is not illegitimate to assume that mural painting must have existed in the Indus epoch. For pottery decoration gives well-composed vignettes of life, using both symmetry and asymmetry in grouping and following generally a realistic style though occasionally attempting abstraction with success, as for instance in the streamlining of the form of a deer into a silhouette with a calligraphic verve of line, its horns sweeping back in ripples.

If the curtains come down now and the stage remains dark for many centuries, it is on one of the world's greatest treasures of art —the caves of Ajanta in Maharashtra — that they rise. Hinayana Buddhism remembered only the transience of things, the pervasiveness of pain. But Mahayana discovered that the tears at the heart of things were often tears of compassion and that this radiant fact could redeem the world. This perception created an art whose pictorial excellences are manifold and complete. Ajanta has anatomy drawn with both fidelity and rhythm, a sensuous intuition of form and colour and above all the whole processional movement of Siddhartha's story, the child at the mother's breast, the infant at play, the youth at his pleasures, then the sickening of the senses and the turning away from the sheltered domestic hearth, the torment of the soul, the



Bodhisatva Padmapani: Fresco painting at Ajanta 5th to 6th century.

final tranquil enlightenment and the return to the fold of men. It is this final return from the lonely summit to the valley where ordinary people dwell that has proved to be of the greatest significance to art. When young Siddhartha left his home, he had wanted to take his son with him, but he could not do it as the mother's hand protectingly encircled the child even in sleep. He remembered this when he became the Buddha and said: "As a mother protects her only son, so let every one cultivate a boundless compassion towards all that has life." The Hinayana ideal was the Arhat who renounced the world for his own personal Nirvana or salvation. The Mahayana ideal became the Bodhisattva who renounced Nirvana for himself and was reborn again and again to serve suffering humanity. The Jataka tales narrated these legends and produced great literature. Ajanta retold them in line and colour and produced great art. As the Bodhisattva was reborn not only as men in various walks of life but also as a swan or a deer or an elephant, both urban and rural life as well as forest life were mirrored in the paintings in comprehensive variety.

Ajanta art spans nearly a millennium, from the first century B.C. to the seventh or eighth century. As the chisel and the brush accompanied the message of peace when Buddhism radiated to many lands of the Asian continent, Ajanta became a great fountainhead for Asiatic art. We find the pictorial idiom of Ajanta reappearing with only marginal ethnic modulation in Sigiriya in Sri Lanka, Bamiyan in Afghanistan, in many places along the old silk route to China like Dung Huang in the Gobi desert, in Korea and in Horiyuji in Japan. In India we find the Ajantan mural style prolonging over many centuries and in many places. But the line loses its lyricism in the murals, being conserved for a longer while only in the miniature. The Pala period palm-leaf miniatures of Bengal (tenth and eleventh centuries) fumbled initially by composing the picture in many places in imitation of the Ajantan mural, ended up in crowding the pictorial space and stabilised itself by limiting the figures and arranging them in a single frontal plan. But as time went by, the line in the miniature became, like that in the mural, angular and brittle. This pictorial idiom spread to the palm-leaf and later paper miniature illustrations of western India, mostly of Jain religious texts, during the fifteenth century. Later the

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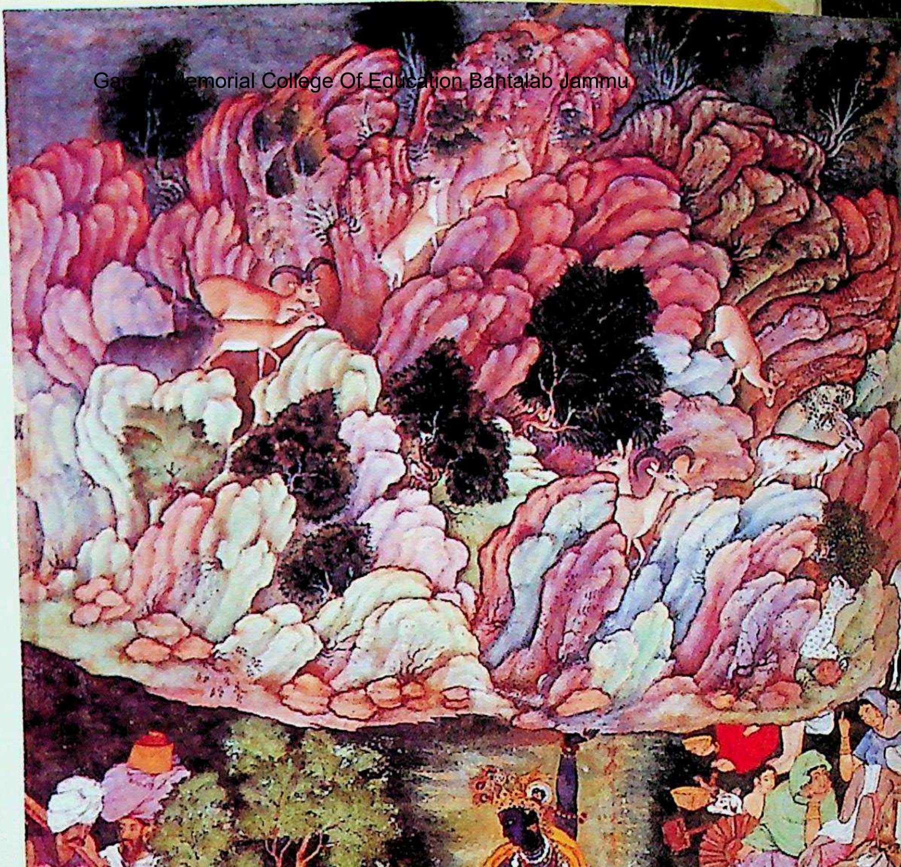
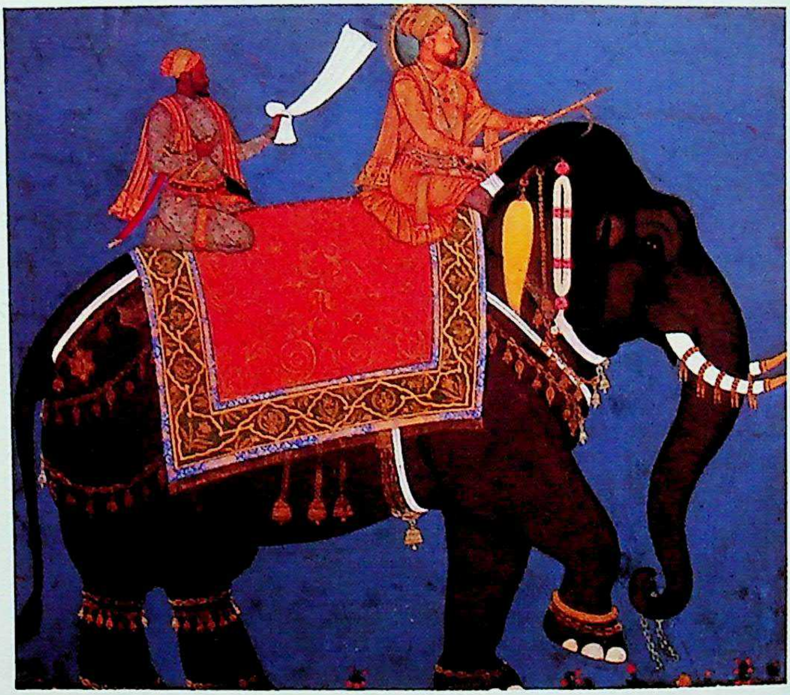


The young god Krishna asserted his power over the god Indra by convincing the *gopis* (herdswomen) near Mount Govardhan to worship the spirit of the mountain in his place, after which Krishna transformed himself into the Mountain spirit - and took delight in their offerings. Enraged by the upstart god, Indra scoffed at him before the *gopis* and raised up a terrible storm, threatening the land and people. The gopis and their families pleaded for Krishna's help, which he gave unstintingly. As though it was a large umbrella he lifted Mount Govardhan and balancing it on his little finger, protected them from the storm. From a manuscript of the Harivamsa, Mughal 1590.

style spread to secular texts too and when a romantic and lyrical poem like *Vasanta Vilasa* (Dalliance in Spring) was chosen for illustration, the line recovered sensuous curves and the imagery its graciousness. Spring was in the air, even before the Moghuls in the sixteenth century brought the almond blossoms of Persia to the Indian landscape and painting.

It is essential to emphasise this because some scholars have dogmatically asserted that but for the advent of the Persian miniature along with the Moghuls, no genuine miniature (independent of a surround of calligraphed text) would have emerged in India. But in central India, in what has been called proto-Rajasthani painting, such a miniature did emerge, illustrating romantic poems like *Chaura Panchasika* (Fifty Stanzas on Stolen Love) or visualising Ragas or the Indian musical modes. Moghul painting too has been erroneously regarded as merely a provincial school of Persian painting. Inspired by a current of Persian poetry which was steeped in fantasy and romance. Persian painting had acquired what has been called a paradisiacal temper. In radiant but unearthly landscapes, handsome princes sought and won beautiful princesses after many unbelievable adventures. Emperor Akbar's temperament, deeply interested in contemporaneity and history in the making, changes all this. He commissioned the Persian translation and illustration of the *Mahabharata*, the Indian epic which is full of the turbulence of history. He used to take 'war artists' with him in his military campaigns. As in theme, in style too there was a great change. The Moghul atelier was started with only two masters from Persia and we know at least forty indigenous painters, from Gujarat, Kashmir, Gwalior and elsewhere, who were recruited by Akbar. The procedure too was corporate for in the same picture, one artist executed the outlines, another the figures, a third the background and a fourth added the colour. The style was a synthesis and Moghul painting thus became an Indian school. Basically a court art, it loved to reflect imperial pomp and circumstance, depicted assemblies and embassies, hunts and battles. It is a sophisticated and aristocratic art, the line elegant, brushwork fine, colour luminous and the pictorial surface perfectly finished.

The Sultanates of Deccan in the south had contacts with Persian painting even before the north had them through the

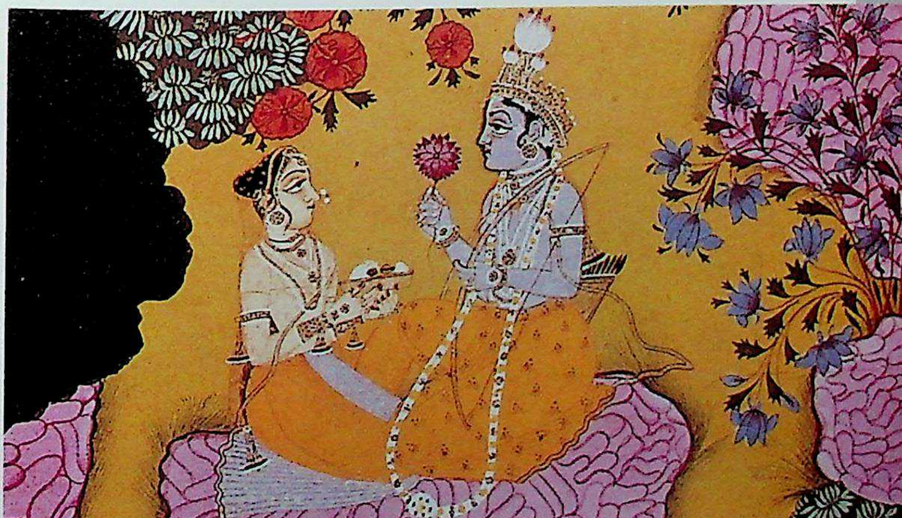


Sultan Muhammad Adil-Shah and Ikhlas Khan ride an elephant, Deccani, ca. 1645 watercolour on paper.

advent of the Moghuls. But the culture of the south, even more syncretic than that of the north, made the Deccani style also a synthesis. Under the patronage of enlightened rulers like Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur, Deccani painting became an important Indian school, its major contributions being portraits, royal processions and Raga paintings.

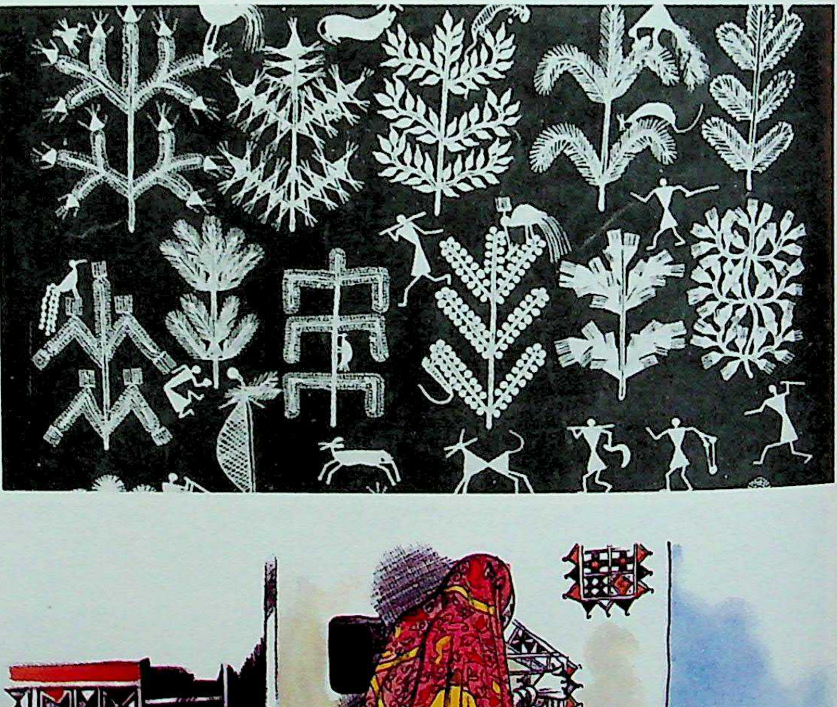
The rulers of the Rajput states were vassals of the Moghuls and it is true that their artists learned a lot from the art of the Moghul atelier. But that itself was a synthesis and, in the further development, by choosing themes from the great myths and legends of the land, the story of Rama and Krishna, Rajput painting ceased to be confined to the life of the court like Moghul painting and became the art of the people. There were many Rajput principalities, both in the plains of Rajasthan and in the Himalayan hills and valleys, and therefore there were too many schools than can be described in a summative account. But, of the schools in the plains, two deserve special mention. The style of Kotah painting, mostly of forests, wild animals and concealed hunters, anticipates by nearly eighty years the primitive vision and vigour of European Fauvists like Douanier Rousseau. In Kishangarh, the life-experience of the ruler, Samant Singh, who found fulfilment in his love for the beautiful Bani Thani, reinforced his poetic temperament and led him to sponsor paintings where the love of Krishna and Radha finds the most exalted expression and there is an extraordinary expansion of the experience of space reflecting the experience of euphoria.

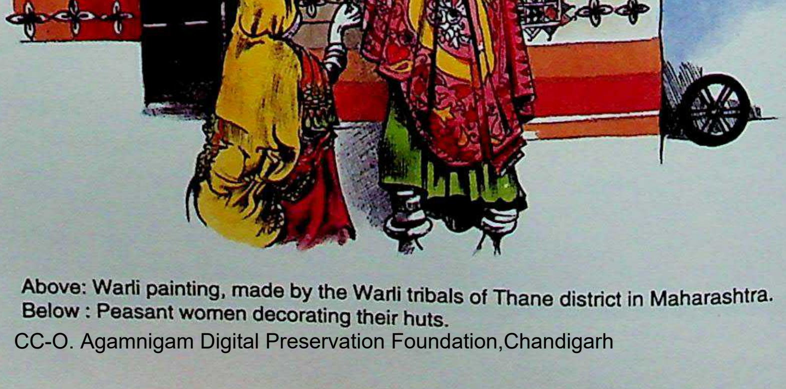
But it is in the hills where the air is cleaner, the flora greener and life simpler that the Rajput miniature gained the greatest lyricism in expression. Here also there were many schools and only two can be mentioned. The boldly stylised trees of Basohli, the flat planes of stark colour and the distinctive figures with their large, lustrous eyes, embody a vision of the world charged with passion. The figures become the dramatis personae of an intensely wrought action that develops in a strange stillness, for we find none of the familiar pictorial devices for lyrical evocation. Kangra painting is rich in these, but they are used spontaneously and convincingly. Flowering sprays indicate that the cloistered gardens of lovers' hearts have burst into blossom. Bare branches indicate the desolation of separation, the sadness and the loneliness and the wistful remembering.



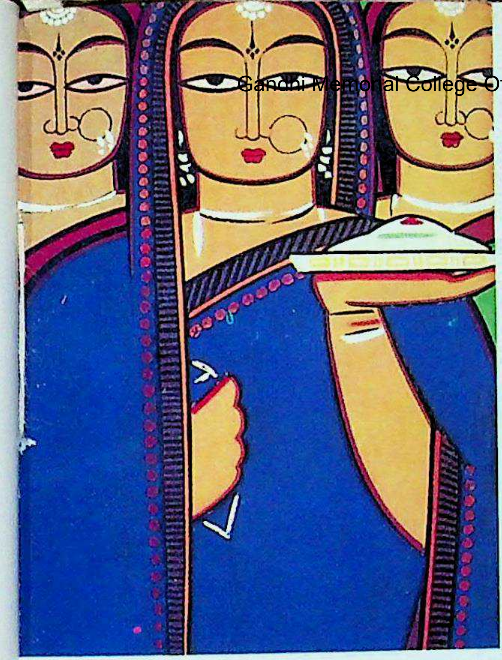
A detail from 'Rama and Sita', Rajput Miniature, ca. 1740. Opaque watercolour on paper.

Art historians who see culture as the concern and achievement of the elite regard the nineteenth century as a phase of decline. But the people, on whom the burden of history sat most heavily, have managed through the ages to celebrate their invincible joy of life in folk art of a wide variety. Every region of India had its tradition of bardic recitals with the help of picture scrolls. Peasant women decorated their huts with paintings of familiar legend. The Madhubani paintings of Bihar,

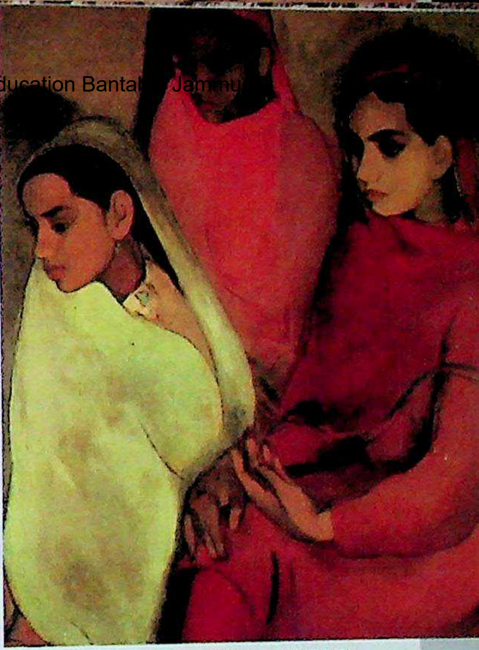




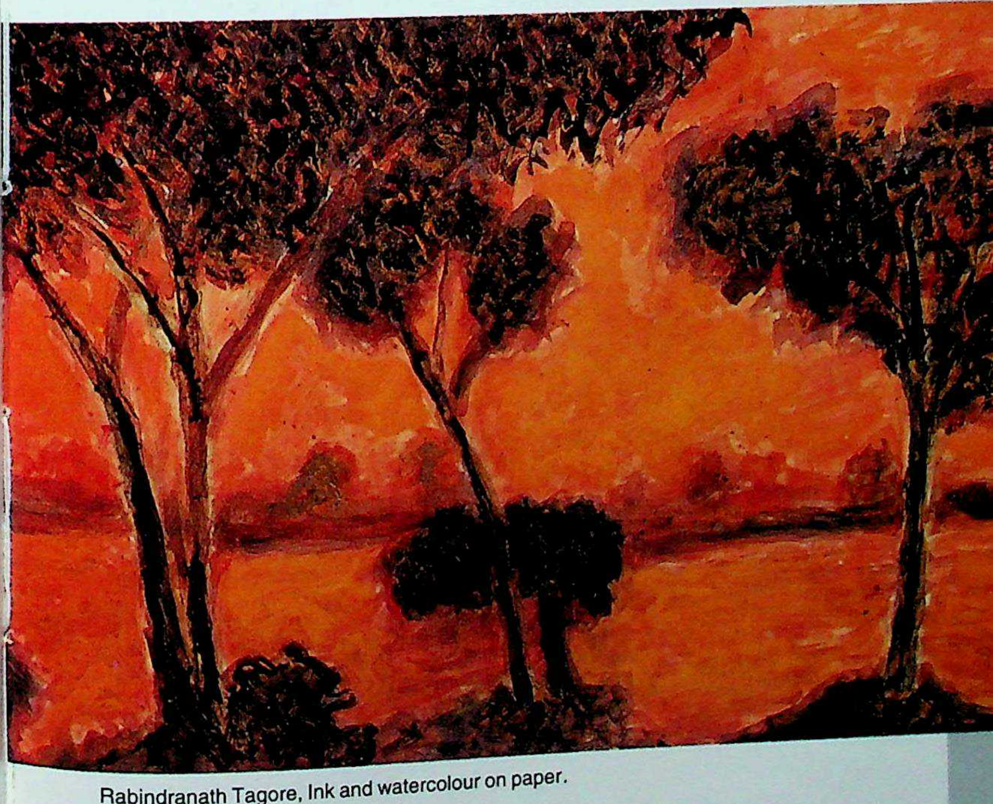
Above: Warli painting, made by the Warli tribals of Thane district in Maharashtra.
Below : Peasant women decorating their huts.



Jamini Roy,"Three Pujarinis," Tempera on paper.



Amrita Shergil,"Three Girls,"Oil on canvas.



Rabindranath Tagore, Ink and watercolour on paper.

now being done on paper, have become popular all over the world. India herself is discovering her long-ignored treasure of tribal painting and the world is welcoming it. Jivya Soma Mase, a painter of the Warli tribe of Maharashtra, was presented in a one-man show in the 1978 Biennale of Menton.The paintings of Janghar Singh, a Gond tribal of Madhya Pradesh, were exhibited in the Pompidou Centre in Paris. They belong to traditions that continued throughout the period of decline of classical art.

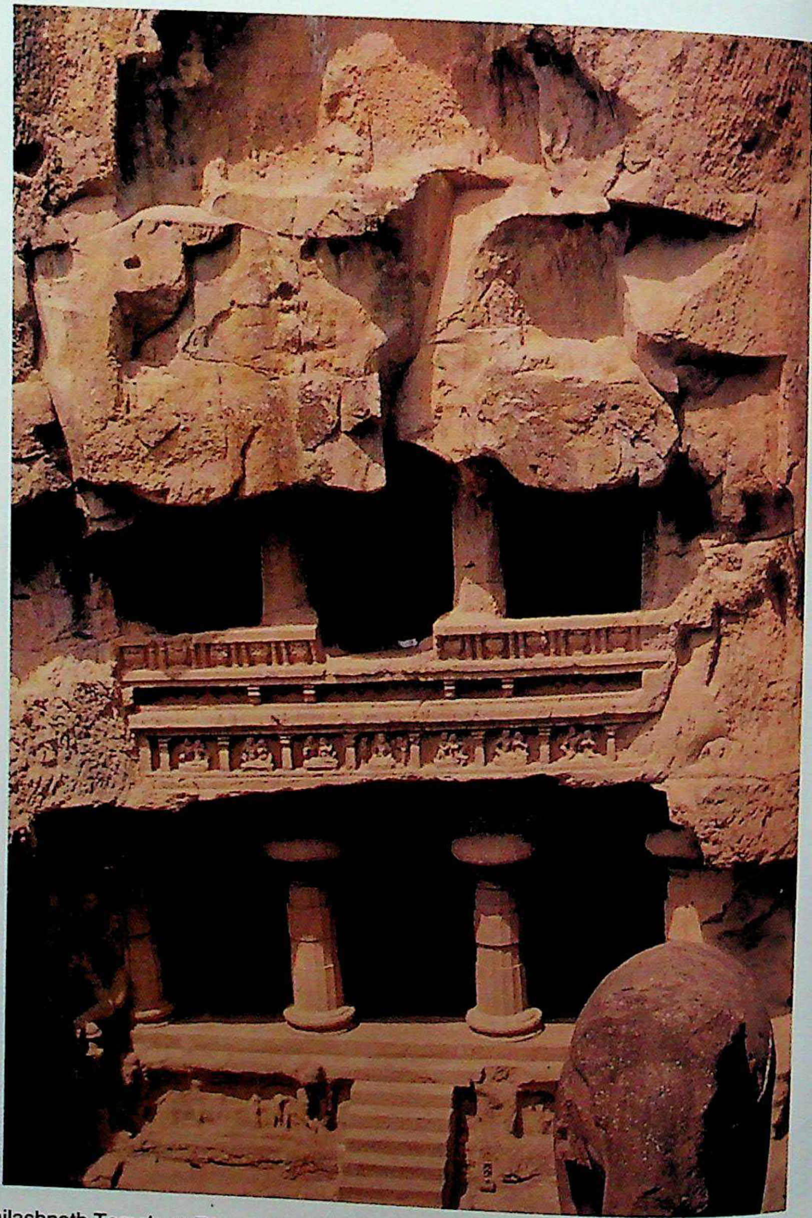
In the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the strong presence of the British, the western academic and realistic style of painting became popular, self-taught in the case of a pioneer like Ravi Varma, through institutional training mostly. Smarting under the humiliation of alien cultural domination, the revivalist painters of Bengal, led by Abanindranath Tagore, rejected western realism and practised the pictorial idiom of Ajantan, Moghul and Rajput painting. But in retrospect their painting appears nostalgic and sentimental.

Four people can be regarded as the pioneers of modern painting in India. While the revivalists went back for inspiration to the aristocratic traditions of the past, Jamini Roy turned to the still living, if ignored, tradition of folk art and created an art of great vigour. Europe and India blended in the heredity of Amrita Shergil who integrated the Ajantan style and the western pictorial idiom in her art and presented the life of the Punjab peasants, especially women, with deep sympathy. Gaganendranath Tagore experimented with a variety of western styles, indigenised them and moved on to social criticism. Rabindranath Tagore, through his practice and more definitevely through his aesthetic theory, gave virtually a charter to Indian artists for the most adventurous experimentations in art. If there is perhaps excessive imitation of rapidly changing global styles in contemporary Indian art, the repertory of techniques is being steadily enlarged and the insight is beginning to dawn that while all techniques belong to the grammar of art and can be adopted, the message has to be Indian and, for this, continuity has to be forged again with tradition.

Gandhi antalab Jammu

Jatin Das, a contemporary painter.

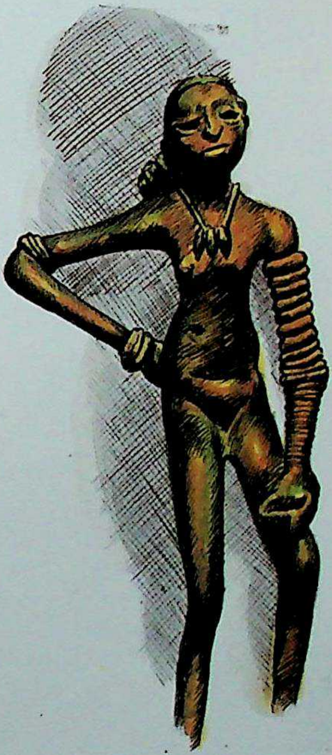
SCULPTURE



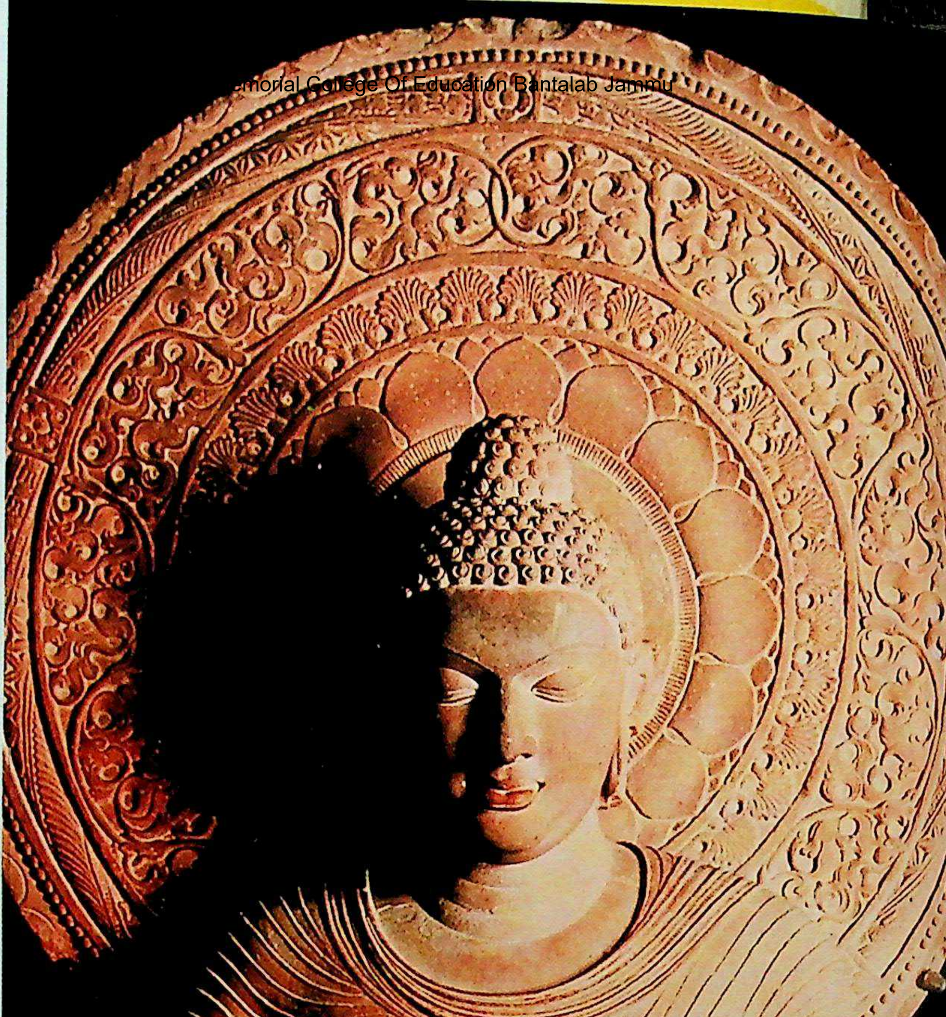
Kailashnath Temple at Ellora, 8th to 9th century A.D.

If we have to make surmises in the case of painting in the epoch of the Indus Valley Civilization, there is compensatingly abundant evidence about the richness of the sculptural tradition and its variety in both medium and theme.

Terracotta is the art which is closest to the primary realities of the world: the earth and the sun. And it begins here an evolution which has pervaded the entire span of India and has been continuous in time right up to the present. The steatite seals are really stone carving in relief in miniature and we have larger sculptures in the round in both limestone and sandstone. Bronze sculpture reveals a sound knowledge of metal casting. The thematic range manages an integral resurrection of the life of that lost epoch for us. There is an abundance of delightful terracotta toys for children. The toy cart is a favourite and its wheels will roll through the centuries to provide the title and figure crucially in the plot of a romantic comedy of the first or second century —Sudraka's *Toy Clay Cart* — which has found a place in the repertory of world drama. The economy must have paid special attention to animal husbandry. Even in the miniature seal the shaping of the bull's form is monumental. In the Indian tradition there has been a very close relation between sculpture and dance and we see its commencement in a small bronze figurine of a dancing girl. And finally we have the abundant and splendid terracotta figurines of the mother goddess, the opulent hip emphasised to suggest



Dancing girl, bronze. Indus Valley civilization



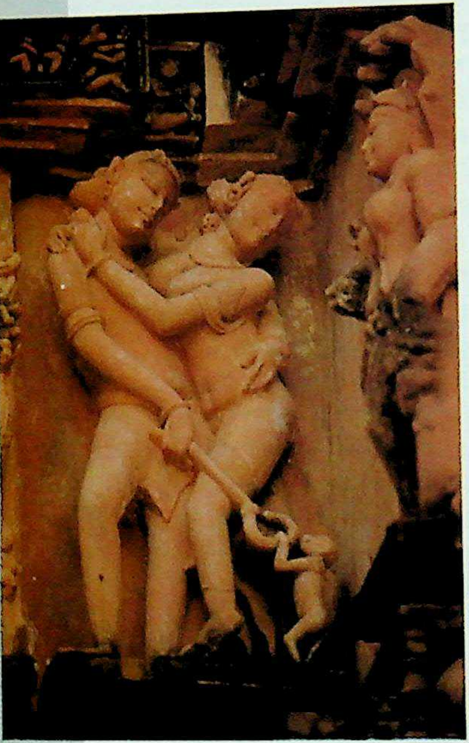
Standing Buddha from Mathura: Sandstone sculpture, Gupta Era 300-500 AD.

generative fertility but still regal and monumental, richly decked in regalia.

The dispersal of Persian craftsmen when the Achaemenid empire was overthrown by the Greeks under Alexander in the fourth century B.C. may have contributed to the monumental and vigorous stylisation of the lions in the Asokan pillar which has been adopted as India's national emblem. But the Mauryan age evolved a gentler style also in the bull of the Rampurva pillar and sympathetic representation of animals continues throughout in Indian sculpture. The Mauryan depiction of Yakshas and Yadshis — nature deities of hills and forests — was apt to be heavy and rather rigid, but the Sungas who displaced the Mauryas in the second century B.C. transformed the Yakshis into elegant, bejewelled feminine figures. They also developed the skill for fluent narration of episodes from Buddhist legend in running friezes of low-relief or deep-relief sculpture. The Satavahanas (second century B.C. to second century A.D.) refined this skill and narrative sculpture at Amaravati, their capital on the banks of the Krishna river, brilliantly solved the problem of composition in awkward shapes like that of the medallion.

When the Greek flood-tide ebbed away it left a rich silt and in the Indo-Greek kingdoms which emerged in the north-west, the plastic intuition of ancient Greece blended with Buddhist spirituality in the art of Gandhara. This region is not part of India today. But it was part of the vast Kushan empire of Kanishka (second century A.D.) which stretched from the Oxus to the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna. The Kushans resided mostly at Mathura. There was circulation of sculpture and sculptors within the empire and not only Buddhist sculptures irradiated by the Greek love of the idealised beauty of the human figure but sculptures of Greek deities also have been discovered in Mathura. The Kushan epoch however was one of very sophisticated urban culture too. The Yakshis are no longer wood-nymphs but become seductive damsels of the city, scenes of revelry abound and feminine apparel begins its fine ambivalent adventure of revealing while pretending to conceal.

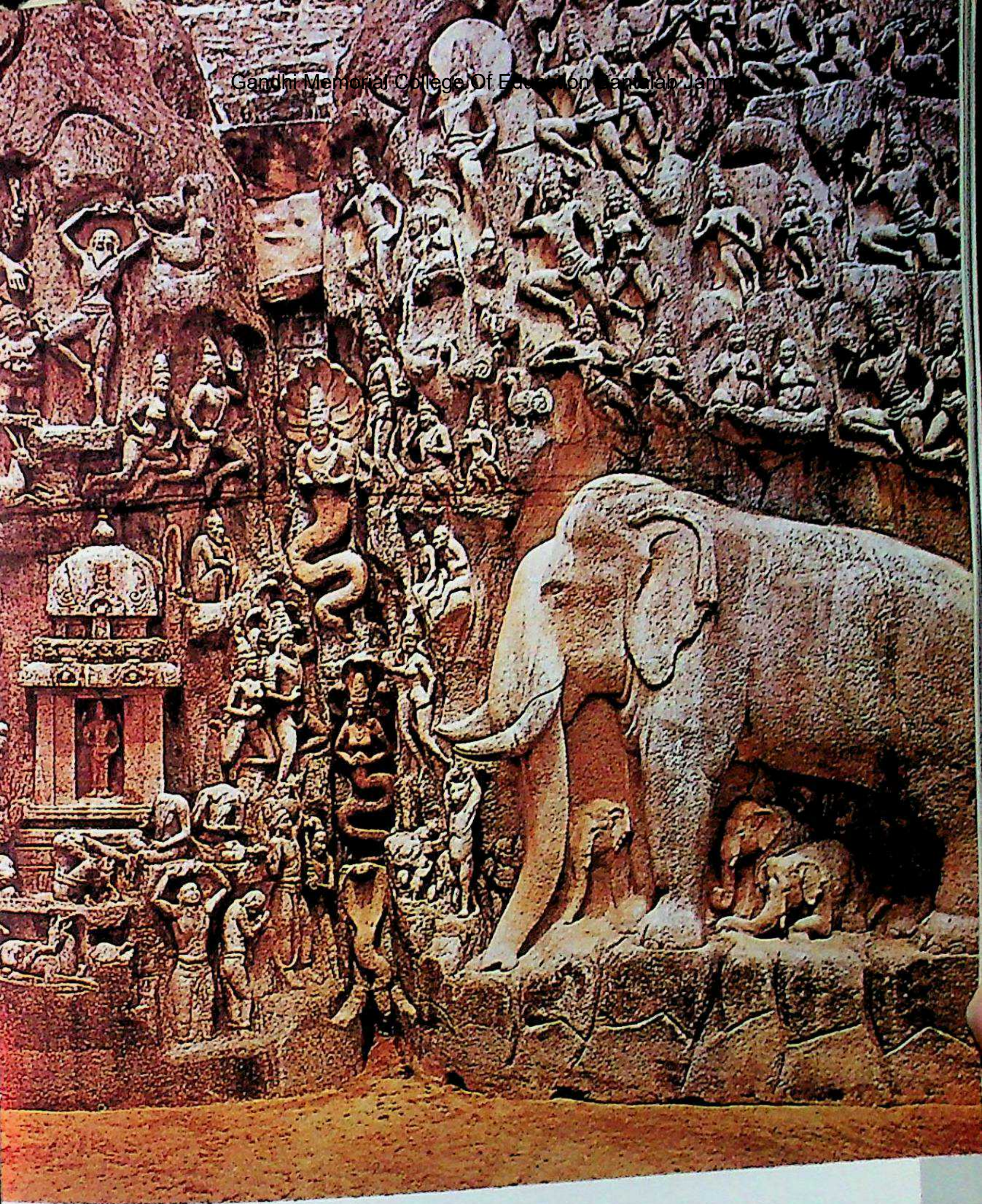
How evolving traditions retain motifs perfected earlier but radically change their import is seen clearly in the epoch of the Guptas (320-600), a shade too frequently but not undeservedly



Lovers and a monkey,
Lakshman Temple, Khajuraho
10th to 12th century.

visually to become a decoratively textured background and frame for the monumental figure of Vishnu. In the representation of the wedding of Siva and Uma, the note changes from monumentalism to lyricism. The wood-nymph, now in the Gwalior museum, is one of the finest creations of that category. Likewise, the twelfth century head from Rajorgarh, belonging to the epoch of the Gahadvalas, is probably the best sculpture in the Indian tradition for the most elegant and elaborate presentation of flower-decked coiffure. This homage to feminine beauty continues. The eroticism of the sculptures of Khajuraho of the Chandella epoch (tenth to twelfth century) has unfortunately diverted attention from the numerous exquisite representations of woman in all her moods, from the involvement of the heart to preparation for the rendezvous, longing, anxious expectation, wistful reverie. The eroticism of the sculptures of the Sun temple of Konark built in the thirteenth century by the Eastern Gangas is far more tempered than that of Khajuraho and it is Rodin's *Kiss* that a similar embracing group here recalls. There are also some striking sculptures of female musicians (drummers, cymbalists), Amazonian in build but attractively sensuous, on the vast terrace of the temple.

Moving south, the masterpiece of the Pallavas of Kanchipuram is the gigantic tableau of the eighth century carved on a whole rockface at Mahabalipuram representing the descent of the Ganga and depicting the teeming life on its banks. But the masterpiece of the whole tradition of South Indian sculpture is the bronze Nataraja of the Cholas of the eleventh century. The dance of deity is the dance of creation, from the atom to the star. In figurations, which place the accent on the

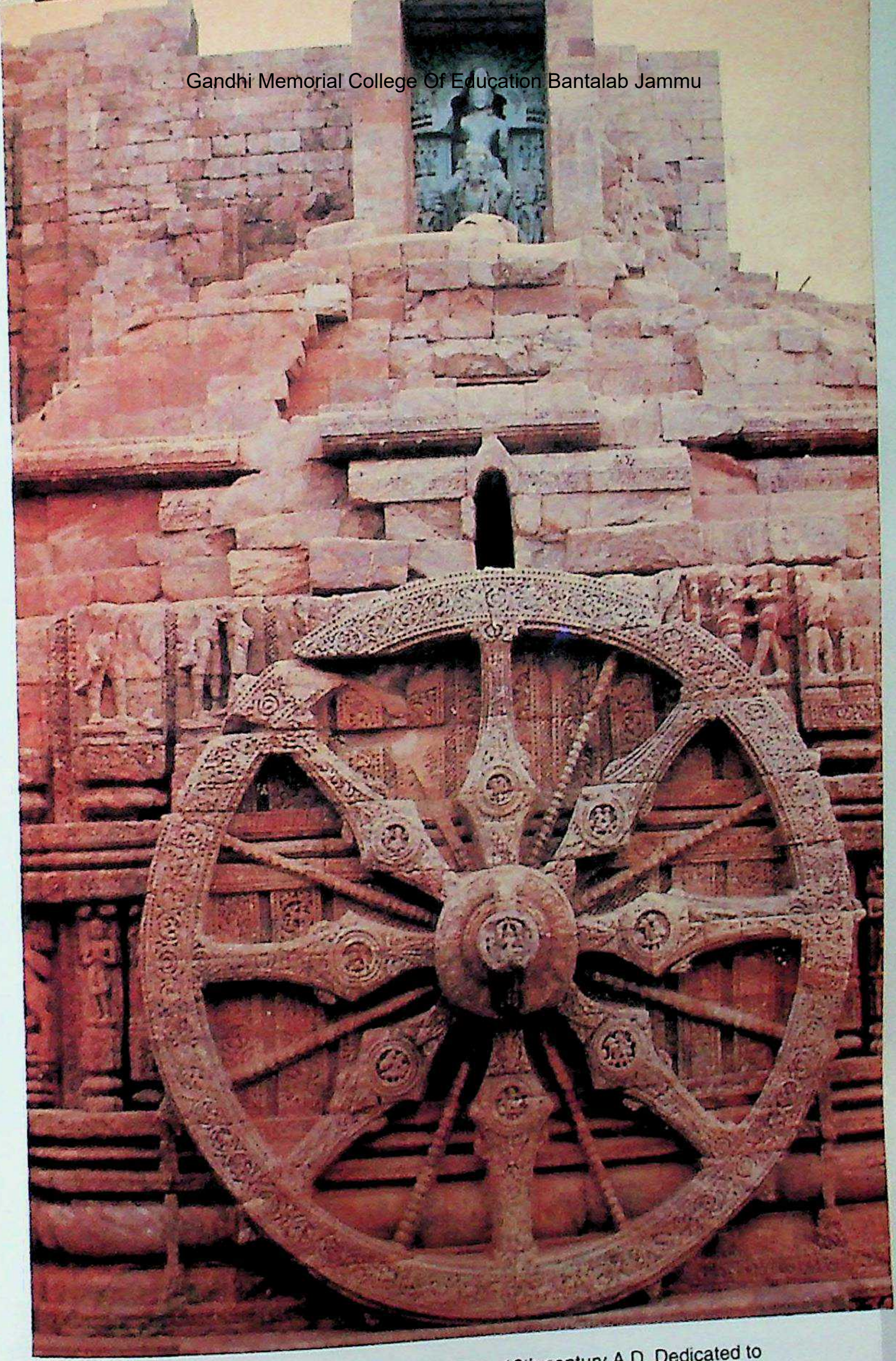


The Descent of the Ganges. Detail of relief from Mahabalipuram 7th century.

serene, still centre within the flux of the world, the great locks of the god fall gracefully on the back and shoulders. But when the accent is on the incessant flux, the locks swirl, speed away like waves and at the height of the dance they are supposed to fill all space and enmesh the stars. The protecting gesture of the hand assures man that the world's process is not a continuous change and perishing but the unfolding of a divine and benign programme.

The soft chloristic schist used by Karnataka sculpture in the Hoysala epoch of the twelfth century encouraged very profuse detailing and ornamentation, but the dancing maidens have sensuous appeal with their very intricately carved jewellery and the opulent ripeness of their figure. In the sixteenth century sculpture at Hampi in the Vijayanagar epoch, royal pomp and circumstance were celebrated in lively scenes of elephant processions, cavalcades, marching soldiery and troupes of dancers. Nayak period Madura of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced a few delightful creations like the bejewelled lute player in stone and the Deepa Lakshmi or damsel carrying a small votive lamp of oil and wicks, in bronze and brass. In the sixteenth century Ettumanoor temple of Kerala, the entire story of the *Ramayana* has been carved round the central shrine. In the brick temples of Bengal of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, past history and legend, contemporary history including European intrusions and the life of the people were documented with astonishing comprehensiveness.

Today's sculpture in India, as in any other country, reflects global trends. There is now a growing awareness that the gain in cosmopolitanism does not quite compensate the loss of roots. A most significant emergent trend is that, even if it is done in new materials like steel, aluminium, fibreglass and even fibre, the form is trying to recover the iconic quality, the power to stir the religious instincts of awe and adoration that are humanistically the most valuable strains of the Indian cultural heredity.



Built at Konark, Orissa, during the Ganga Dynasty 13th century A.D. Dedicated to the Sun God-Surya, it is in the form of the Sun God's chariot (ratha)-with twelve giant wheels - each nearly 10 feet high and drawn by seven horses.

THE CUISINE OF INDIA

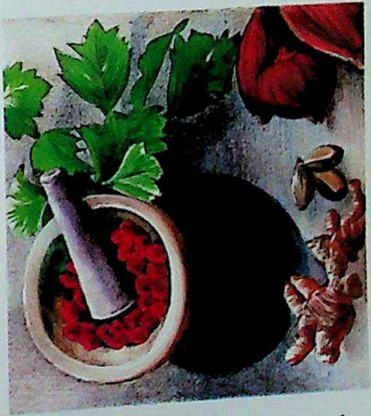
NERGIS DALAL

"Sikandari Raan".

NERGIS DALAL *comes from a family of gourmet cooks and her cookery columns in IS and The Hindustan Times ran for several years. Her book A HUNDRED EASY-TO-MAKE PUDDINGS was such a success that it is being reprinted once again. She has also published four novels, a book of short stories and a children's book. She has been writing middle articles for The Times of India and other papers, for over thirty years. Her short stories have won several first prizes in competitions and are broadcast frequently over the BBC World Service. She lives in Dehra Dun and has three grown-up children.*

THERE is really no such thing as a cuisine of India and no one single dish which might be termed typical of the whole land. Cuisine is born of circumstances and the land, the climate and customs impose their own terms and limitations. In addition, the vast complexity of cultural, religious and historical heritages, with their own particular rituals and observances, creates a cuisine which is as varied and diverse as the people who inhabit the land.

Throughout the 5000 years of its recorded history, India has been invaded by vast numbers of traders, conquerors, missionaries, immigrants and refugees, each of whom have left their imprint on the lives and manners of the people. The Greeks, the Moghuls and the British, as well as Huns, Mongols, Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Portuguese and Dutch, all entered India for trade or conquest, adding their customs and eating habits to the richness and flavour of the native cuisine. Because there are so many castes and creeds, so many different religions with their own preferences and inhibitions about food, a vast multicultural cuisine has evolved, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, influenced also by geographical regions and their proximity to rivers and seas, to mountains and lush forests, to fertile valleys and barren deserts.



Perhaps the single unifying factor in all Indian cooking is the use of spices. Indian cooking, no matter from which region or geographical area, would be impossible without the use of spices. They are used not only for their flavour but also for their preservative and medicinal properties. Three thousand years ago the ancient Sanskrit science of medicine, Ayurveda, listed many different spices as cures for digestive or other ailments. It was claimed that they could even help to sharpen the brain, improve memory and make the eyes sharp and bright.

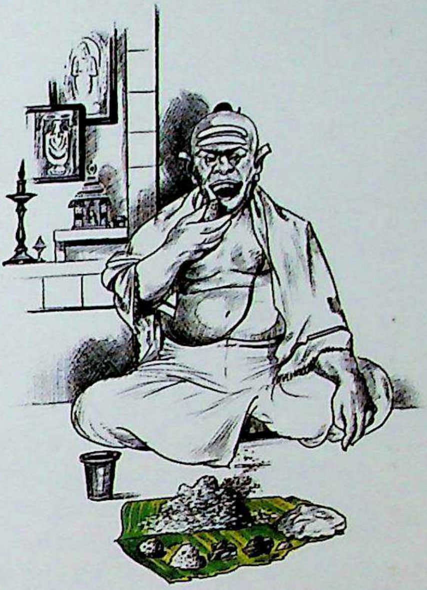
Explorers and traders were often enticed to Indian shores by the promise of spices. To the Malabar coast of Kerala came Phoenician sailors, Greeks, Romans and Chinese. From Goa, cargoes of spices were sent to the market places in the West, where they sold for fabulous prices. In the 13th century, Marco Polo, returning from his visit to India, reported the abundance of pepper, cinnamon and ginger available here.

Indian food is not necessarily hot and from the fiery curries of Andhra and Goa, to the blander, more subtle flavours of the North, there is a vast in-between area where food can be spicy and flavourful without being hot, or just barely hot enough to tickle the palate. In spite of being so common, there is still something romantic and exotic about the names — cummin, coriander, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, pepper, turmeric, saffron, ginger, fennel, nutmeg, mace, fenugreek, cayenne, and asafoetida.

Indian food although spicy is not necessarily hot. In some dishes only one or two spices may be used and in others as many as fifteen. They are used in many different ways — pounded dry or ground with water, coconut milk or vinegar, on special masala stones. Regional and religious differences prevail even here. Kashmiris do not use garlic or onion in their food. They use asafoetida, but Muslims do not use this spice, and so it goes. The wonderful chutneys, pickles and *achars*, without which no Indian meal would be considered complete, make imaginative use of different combinations of spices, cooked in vinegar or soaked in oil and put in the sun to mature.

Mint Chutney

All Indian food, all over the country, is traditionally eaten with the fingers, and this is an art in itself, performed with precision and delicacy. Only the tips of the fingers of the right hand are used to carry food to the mouth. This is easy enough in the North, where breads are made from wheat and curries and sauces are thick and cling to meat and vegetables. In the South, where rice is the staple, the food is more liquid and sauces and curries tend to be thin and soupy. Eating with the tips of the fingers is not always possible and there is some inevitable use of the whole hand, in order to capture all the food on one's banana leaf or *thali*. *Thalis*——round plates made from silver or stainless steel — are used all over the country. In the North, small bowls or *katoris* are used to hold more liquid dishes, but in the South this is not the norm.


A South Indian at his meal.

There are millions of vegetarians in India who consider that the eating of any kind of meat, fish or fowl makes the body and mind impure. "the intellect will be pure," wrote Manu the lawgiver of ancient times. Ahimsa, or non-injury to any living creature, is still considered a cardinal virtue for many Indians, but like everything else in this vast and complex country, there are different forms of vegetarianism too.

The Jains, whose religion is an off-shoot of Hinduism, are followers of the saint Mahavira, and the most rigid and orthodox of all vegetarians. Not only do they eat no meat, fish, fowl, eggs or honey, but they also refuse to eat any vegetable that grows under the ground, in case some small insects, harmed while uprooting the plant, could be killed. Their priests wear masks to prevent the inadvertent breathing in of any small creatures.

Although in ancient India meat was not a prohibited item, by the fifth centuury B.C. Hindu scriptures prohibited meat for the Brahmins, traditionally a caste of priests and scholars —but even here there were many exceptions. While Kashmiri Brahmins ate meat, Saraswat and Bengali Brahmins ate fish. Many others who were not Brahmins were staunchly vegetarian, eating no flesh or eggs. No Hindus eat beef of any kind. In the villages of India, even in the North, meat is generally not eaten, but the diet is varied, with grains, lentils, fruit and vegetables, supplemented with milk, butter and ghee. The south of India, in general, remains vegetarian, although even here, as with everything in India, there are exceptions.

Socially and culturally, food is of great importance and much emphasis is placed on hospitality. From the smallest, humblest, village hutment, to more affluent homes, the serving of food to guests, however transient they may be, is considered mandatory. Every religious festival, every wedding, birthday or special occasion is impossible to celebrate without the preparation and serving of special foods. There are hundreds of different religious festivals celebrated in India and for each one, special sweets and foods are prepared.

Harvest festivals such as Baisakhi in the North and Pongal in the South celebrate the corn and rice harvests, with music, dancing and ceremonial feasts. Onam is also a festival to celebrate the rice harvest in Kerala. An unbelievable variety of dishes, both sweet and spicy, are made from both these grains and often as many as thirty different preparations from one kind of grain will be turned out. Festivals such as Holi, Diwali, Dussehra and the Muslim festivals of Id, all have their own particular preparations which are made and served at this time.

Although Indian cuisine is not noted for its desserts, its sweets are famous and the variety staggering. Jalebis, burfis, gulab jamuns, halvas, balushahis, peras, rasgullas, shakarparas and dozens of others made from milk, cream, ghee, nuts and saffron, are delectably rich and mouth-watering. A Canadian friend of ours visits India regularly to see her friends and to eat as many burfis as possible —"to last me until the next time", she says. And of course there are so many different kinds of burfi too — almond, pistachio, chocolate, and coconut.

Limca
समोसे
जलेबी
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Hot " Jalebis" and "Samosas" being sold.

Although all over India there is diversity and differences in the food eaten as well as the eating habits of the people, the difference is most striking between the North and South. Here everything is different and it is almost like visiting two distinct and separate countries, as remote as possible from each other in distance, history, climate and culture. Northerners are generally light-skinned and tall, while the people of the South are dark-skinned and more slightly built. Wheat is the staple food in the North, while rice predominates in the South. Southerners drink coffee while the people of the North are tea-drinkers. The differences continue in their homes, kitchens and life styles. Northerners have a more lavish lifestyle and more elaborate dishes, but in the South there is an emphasis on austerity and plain living. Both have great cuisines, difficult to authenticate outside of their own particular milieus.

At the northernmost part of India is Kashmir, bordered on the east by Tibet and China, on the north by the Soviet Union (now Russia) and Afghanistan and on the west by Pakistan. Kashmiri Brahmins retain a very strong sense of their own identity and although Brahmins they are meat eaters, specialising in lamb dishes and using ghee as a cooking medium instead of oil. On special occasions they serve a whole medley of dishes made with lamb, each one different from the other. Lamb is made into pulaos and biryanis, or used to make *Rogan Josh* or *Shahi Korma,* as well as a famous lamb dish made from chops cooked with milk and spices till tender and then fried crisp in a batter made from chick-pea flour, salt and chillis, called *Qabargh.*

Kashmir, however, is predominantly Muslim and typically Moghul dishes are favourites here. One of the great favourites of all is *Shakootee*, a rich lamb dish made with red chillis, saffron and onions, simmered in vinegar with turmeric and coconut

South Indian Thali.

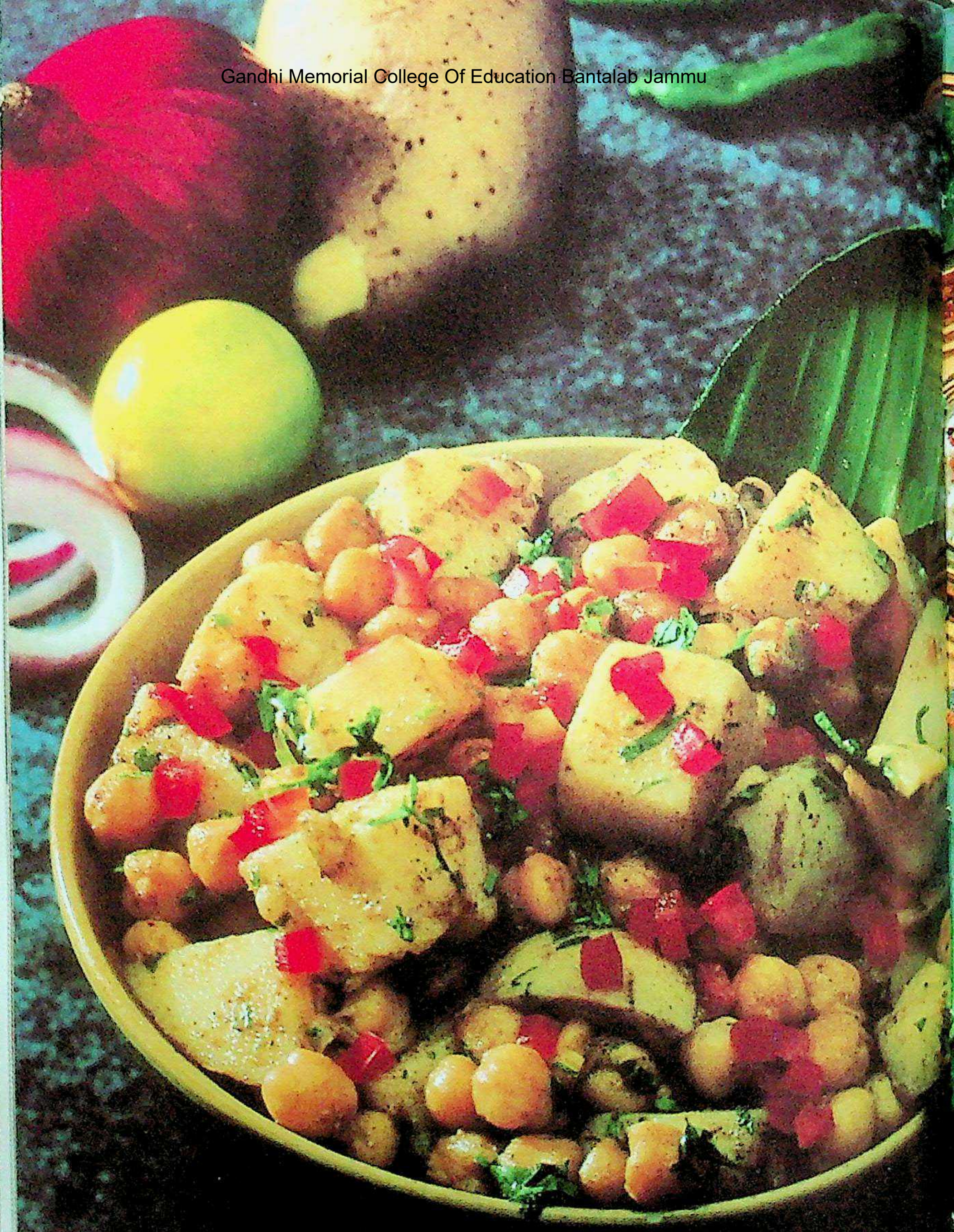
milk. There are also rich pulaos and biryanis, Moghlai kababs, grilled over hot coals and served with a special cream and nut sauce; *Korma*, pieces of boneless lamb cooked with spices and saffron in yoghurt, as well as *Badami Gosh*,which is meat with almonds,cinnamon, cloves and cardamon. Special breads are served with the food such as naan, paratha, tandoori roti, kulcha and poories.

In the south of India, rice is the main dish and the heart of the cuisine and it is made use of in hundreds of different ways, steamed, boiled, ground with lentils and fermented or soaked overnight and ground to a paste. Rice is always the main dish for all meals, but lentils or dals are also used extensively. Lentils provide an excellent source of protein for vegetarians and there are many different varieties available in India, husked or whole, sprouted or mashed to a pulp and used with vegetables. A rice and lentil dough is made into any number of spicy snacks such as idlis, dosas, bondas, wadas and murrukus, perhaps with the addition of chillis or crushed peanuts.

South Indian vegetables too are different and include green bananas, ash and bitter gourd, broad and cluster beans, yam, colacasia, drumsticks and banana flowers. Most south Indian food is very hot but can be tempered down with curds, coconut milk or tamarind. Plenty of green freshly-made chutneys are offered, made from coriander, mint, coconut, green mango and red or green chillis. Most meals are finished off with a think curd (thayyir), eaten with plain, boiled rice.

But not all are vegetarian and coconut in Madras, *Pepper Chicken Chettinad* (perfected by the Chettiar community) as well as *Hot Fried Chicken* from Andhra Pradesh are famous.

And then there is the famous coffee of South India. No other coffee in the world is quite as good and even the smallest roadside cafes will serve superlatively good, freshly-made, fragrant coffee. Coffee making is a formalized ritual in every household. The housewife will first roast the beans and grind them and finally make any one of three different kinds of coffee — *filter coffee, degree coffee,* (the milk in this is measured with a

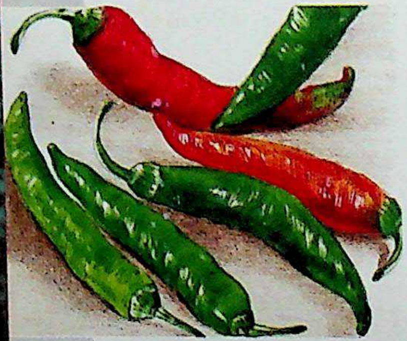


"Aaloo channa chaat."

Kerala fish curry.

lactometer), and finally the famous *decoction*, where the coffee drips slowly through to produce a rich concentrate. This is mixed with boiling milk and sugar and poured from utensil to utensil in a long stream to blend it thoroughly and make it frothy. Filter coffee is much simpler to make. The coffee powder, freshly ground, is put into a brass vessel and boiling water poured over. This is allowed to stand covered and then carefully filtered through muslin which has previously been soaked in strong coffee, so that the fibres are impregnated.

In Maharashtra the food can be both bland or hot. Vegetables are used in innovative ways and special-occasion *thalis* are ritually arranged with food in a specially placed order. Best-known to outsiders is *Pao Bhaji* , a mixture of finely cut vegetables, cooked in butter and served with crusty bread, and *Shrikhand*, a preparation made from yoghurt, sugar, saffron and nuts. The yoghurt is hung up overnight to drip and then the sugar and thickened residue is painstakingly forced through muslin to produce a velvety smooth cream, which is then flavoured with saffron and sprinkled with nuts.



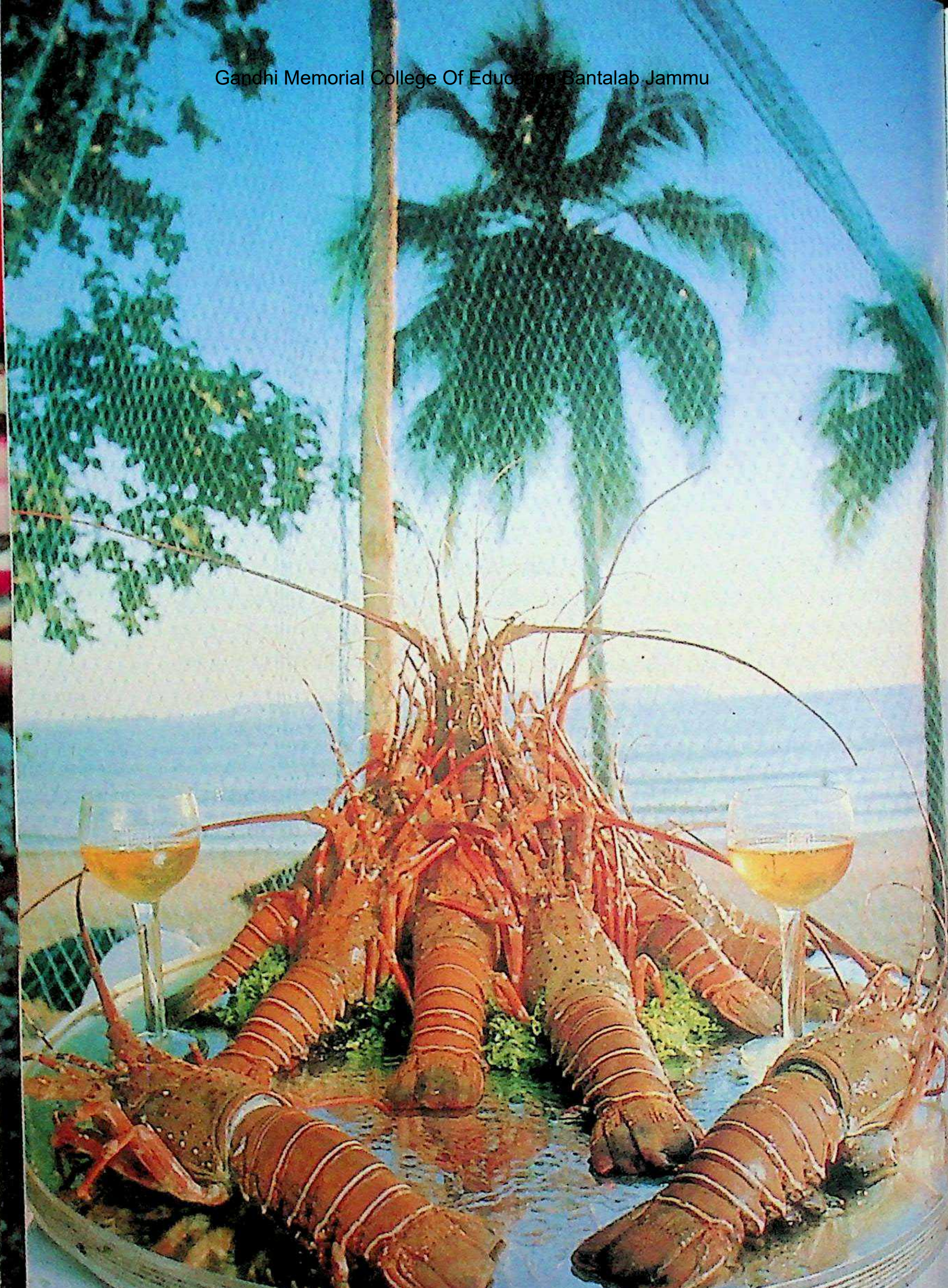
Gujarat, like Maharashtra, is mainly vegetarian but Kerala and Goa are in a different class altogether.

In Kerala, fishing is a way of life with sardines, pomfret, mackeral crab and prawns, plentiful. Curries form the mainstay of the cooking and though invariably served with rice, can cover a multitude of different culinary tastes. Most curries are very hot, with wet masalas ground finely on stones and made with green or red chillis, coconut, coriander, and plenty of onions and garlic. Other spices too are used and *Kari* leaves, ginger, tamarind and vinegar add their own special, inimitable taste.

Goa stands out as a culinary paradise and tourists visit it as much for its famed beaches and palm and cashew groves, as for its truly fabulous food.

When Alfonso D'Albuerque sailed up the Mandovi river in 1510 and captured Goa from its current rulers, the history of Goa was changed for ever. The conquering Portuguese began a brutal regime to convert the population to Christianity and some of the worst excesses of the inquisition were carried out here. It was, as Burton said, "conversion by fire and steel, the dungeon and the rack." Today Goa is half Hindu and half Christian, but in many aspects there is very little difference in their habits—and Christian converts are often referred to as "Goa Brahmins", if they came from the aristocracy. The food is strongly influenced by Portuguese food and customs and Christian Goans eat just about everything including beef and pork. All Goans, without exception, eat fish and there are as many as 177 different varieties of fish found here. Fish is eaten, in hundreds of different ways and even dried, powdered and sprinkled over other dishes. It is made into pickles, red-hot curries, fried and stuffed with chutney and is eaten every day while meat is eaten only occasionally. It was the Portuguese who first introduced the chilli to India when they arrived in Goa. Goans also invented palm vinegar and both chillis and vinegar play an important part in their food. Primarily rice eaters, Goan Hindus do not eat beef or pork and prefer to use green chillis to red in their curries, which are also very hot. On special feast days, Goan Christians eat a famous pork liver dish, *Sorpotel*, which is eaten with a special steamed bread called *Sannam* instead of rice. Sannam is made from flour and fermented with palm toddy to give it its special flavour. Both Christians and Hindus enjoy a sweet made from molasses and coconut known as *Dosjes*, but Goa's favourite dessert is that fabulously rich cake, *Bebbinca*, made from egg yolks, sugar and coconut milk, and built up in layers.

India's most famous mangoes also come from Goa—the Alphonso and the Pereira, which were transformed into *Aphoosee* and *Payree*, when they were translocated to Maharashtra. Although Goa grows bananas, papaya, chickoo and custard-apple as well as mangoes, ninety per cent of the land for 'garden crops' is devoted to cashew and coconut trees.



Sea Lobsters

Five thousand tonnes of cashew are processed every year – much of it for export, but the Goans are not interested in the cashew-nut. What they want is the cashewapple, which is generally considered hog-food, but which in Goa produces that famous colourless liquid, *Fenni,* more potent than whisky or rum. Of the 300,000 gallons which are produced in Goa, none is exported. All of it is meant solely for local consumption, which makes an awful lot of fenni for each Goan. Fenni is also produced from the palm tree and connoisseurs are never tired of arguing about the merits of each.

Famous in the South is Hyderabad, known for its magnificent Moghul cuisine. Founded sometime in the 1580s by the Qutab Shahi Sultans, it was known for its elaborate etiquette, its art of conversation, its elegant manners and its marvellous cuisine. *Zabaan* and *Izzat* – a man's word and his honour – were everything and formality had to be observed down to the last little detail. Anvar Alikhan recalls that in the old days, if one was offered a paan or a sweet, it was necessary to stand up and salaam seven times before accepting it. Although Hyderabad is no longer what it used to be, one can still eat the wonderful saffron-flavoured biryanis, tikka kababs or muzbi — whole roasted sheep turning slowly over a charcoal grill. I remember best the *Pathar Ka Gosh,* in which a special flat stone is heated to sizzling point, a little oil is poured on it and the meat, previously marinated in a masala made from ginger, garlic, chillis, turmeric and yoghurt, is smacked on to the stone, and when ready (in as little as two or three minutes) is lifted off with long iron tongs and served individually in plates, garnished with thin slices of lime and spicy chutney. Hyderabad has its own special, very rich sweets such as *Badam ki Jali* and *Shahi Tukra,* both of them rich with saffron and nuts. I have unfortunately never tasted exotic desserts such as *Gil-e-firdaus* or *Saq-e-uroos,* for which, in the old days, cooks were hired, who only specialised in making these fabulous dishes.

Even today, foreigners and visitors to the city are persuaded to visit Chandni Chowk at dawn for the famous Hyderabadi breakfast, *nahari,* sheep's trotters, simmered overnight over coals and delicately spiced, to produce a rich, thick broth with the meat as soft as halwa, the whole to be eaten with kulchas a soft, fermented bread.

Bengalis, known for their pride in their own language, traditions, poetry, songs and sweets, also hold the firm opinion that theirs is the best cuisine in the world. A Bengali finds it difficult to live without fish and even Bengali Brahmins, vegetarian in everything else, eat plenty of fish. I once had a meal at a Bengali friend's house where we were served with sixteen different fish dishes.

Punjab, in the north of India, is a fertile and prosperous state (now unfortunately in turmoil) where the land and the farmers, who till the land, are all important. It is also the home of the ten million Sikhs who follow a religion founded by the 15th century Guru Nanak, which is a synthesis of the teachings of Hindus and Muslims. Tall, bearded and handsome, Punjabis, whether Sikh or Hindu, enjoy the good life and celebrate their festivals with singing and dancing. For most people in the villages, the diet is vegetarian, with plenty of buttermilk, *saag*, some kind of homemade bread and pickles. In the winter the favourite *Sarson-ka-Sag* is eaten with *Makki ki Roti* — mustard leaves made into a vegetable and eaten with chappatties made from corn flour. Wheat and corn are all important in this state and very little rice is eaten, and that too, only in the cities. The villagers do not even use rice for making *Khichree,* but use a mixture of bajra (millet) and a special kind of dal called *moth.* They make a rice porridge from ground corn and milk topped with a dollop of fresh butter. Meat is rarely eaten except in the cities where the *tandoor* — a jar-shaped clay oven, sunk into the ground, is used to make not only breads, but the world-famous, *TandooriChicken*. The oven or tandoor is first heated to scorching point and then skinned broiler chickens, which have been marinated in a mixture of yoghurt, ginger, garlic, chillis and sometimes saffron, are impaled on long iron rods and inserted into the hot oven. It takes less than 15 minutes for the chicken to be ready to serve, accompanied by slices of red and white radishes, spring onions, slivers of lime and *achar*. *Naan*, a bread made from wheat flour, yoghurt, sugar, milk, eggs and gee, is kneaded and kept overnight for the dough to ferment. The dough will then be smooth and elastic and can be shaped by hand into the typical oval shape and then slapped on to the sides of the hot tandoor, where it will cook to perfection in a few minutes, emerging spongy and puffed, with the sides brown

खालसा
बटर
चिकन
साग पालक

Punjab's world-famous "Tandoori Chicken".

and a little crisp. *Naans* may be sprinkled with poppyseeds or grated onion.

Tandoori Chicken and *Naan* and *Tandoori Rotis*, can be cooked in an ordinary electric oven but that authentic smoky flavour will be missing. Foreigners seem to love this type of food and when India and Burma were engaged in border talks about demarcation, the Burmese Surveyor-General always kept time for a visit to Delhi's Moti Mahal, where he consumed two whole tandoori chickens at a time and became very well known there. Although a Buddhist, like the Tibetans, he was a meat eater.

The minority communities of India are best seen in a cosmopolitan city such as Bombay, which is a mosaic of many small groups, each with its own distinct cultural identity and cuisine. The Anglo–Indians, the Bohras, the Parsis, the Jews and others live together in complete amity, each pursuing their own individual lifestyles and cuisine. Anglo-Indians, influenced by both the British and Indian food, evolved their own curries, pickles, and meat and fish dishes. They invented *Jhal Feraizee*, made from cold, cooked mutton and spices; *Fowl Kedegree*, made with a roasted chicken, butter and dal and rice; *Fricadel*, a dish made with veal, suet and eggs; *Pish Pash*, rice and chicken or mutton mince, cooked together with onions and green ginger, to a soft mush; as well as various drinks of which Pumalo Gin and Milk Punch (made with rum, brandy and milk) are extremely good and easy to make. I have a recipe for an Anglo-Indian brinjal pickle, which is the best I have ever tasted and which proved so popular, when I gave the recipe in my cookery column, that to this day I have people writing in to say they have lost the recipe and would I please send it to them again.

The Bohras, followers of the Aga Khan, are a breakaway group from Islam, who follow the teachings of Imam Ismail, who in the 8th century came up with a divergent interpretation of the Islamic laws which they follow strictly even today. Their cuisine is influenced by Gujarati, Rajput and Maharashtrian food as well as the cuisines of Egypt, Iran, Syria and Iraq. They observe Islamic dietary rules but their food is varied, and delicious, especially the biryani which on feast days is eaten from a single large *thali*, with everyone helping themselves as they sit around it. The Bohras also make *Nahari*, usually with

Memorial College Of Education Barnala

Above : "Murgh Musallam".
Below : "Taftaan".

breast or rib chops, which are simmered overnight over coals to form the typical thick, spicy gravy with meat as tender as halwa. A rich creamy dessert is usually served on special occasions called *Sheer Korma,* served in silver bowls and sprinkled with almonds and raisins.

The Parsis, largely settled in Bombay, were refugees from Persia. They came to India fourteen hundred years ago. While merging happily into the mainstream, they have yet managed to retain their own religion and culture. Hard working and one hundred per cent literate, they have made their name in industry, the arts, science and in finance. They are great philanthropists, and scholarships from the house of Tata are available to all communities. Their religion, Zorastrianism, does not enjoin either austerity or asceticism. They are encouraged to eat well, live well and help everyone.

Their cuisine is basically meat-oriented and all vegetables are either cooked with meat, or are topped with some form of eggs. Their best-known dish is *Dhansak* — a combination of four or five different dals, cooked with vegetables and meat and then flavoured with a special masala that is only available in Bombay. It is served traditionally with brown rice and meat kababs and is the one dish that all non-Parsis clamour to eat when visiting Parsi households. They are people who like to eat well and many of their dishes are a gourmet's delight. *Patra-ni-machi* is made with slices of filleted fish, smothered in a green chutney and steamed in banana leaves. *Prawn Patia* is another very special dish, made from prawns cooked in plenty of onions, garlic and chillis, with a sweet and sour sauce made from tomatoes, vinegar and just a little sugar. My mother, who came from a family of gourmet cooks, used to make a chicken and almond curry, which was very thick and red but not too hot. It had become so famous that when I visited old army friends in England, they begged me to make it for them and had all the ingredients ready! Parsis enjoy eating at breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner. Their various sweet and salty snaks are made in a great variety of different forms and *Dal-ni-pori,* sweetened mashed dal with nuts and cardamom is stuffed into layers of pastry to form a very rich snack. *Malai-na-Khaja* is a light puff pastry filled with rose-flavoured cream, and *Khajoor-nee-ghari* are dates, mashed and flavoured and filled into layers of special

"Murgh Malai Kabab".

"Seekh Kabab".

"Jehangiri Shorbagh".

pastry. All these are elaborate and far from easy or simple to make, but taste superb.

All Indian food is eaten either with some form of unleavened bread or rice, or else fermented breads such as *Khameeri roti* and *Naans*. Currie and sauces are never thickened with flour, no matter what western cookery books may say. I have here a book called "Foods of the World", written by Marguerite Patten, a Cordon bleu cook, whose recipe for Indian curry contains flour, raisins and apples — enough to make any Indian cook's hair stand on end with horror. The thickening is done not with flour but with grated onions, coconut milk and masalas, such as ginger and garlic, which must be correctly *bhunoed* (sauteed or fried) till the masala paste begins to smell aromatic and the oil or ghee begins to float on the top. On the

Gand [illegible] ge of Education Bantalab Jammu

Vegetables being sold on shikaras in the Dal Lake, Srinagar, Kashmir.

A typical grocery shop and a fruitseller.

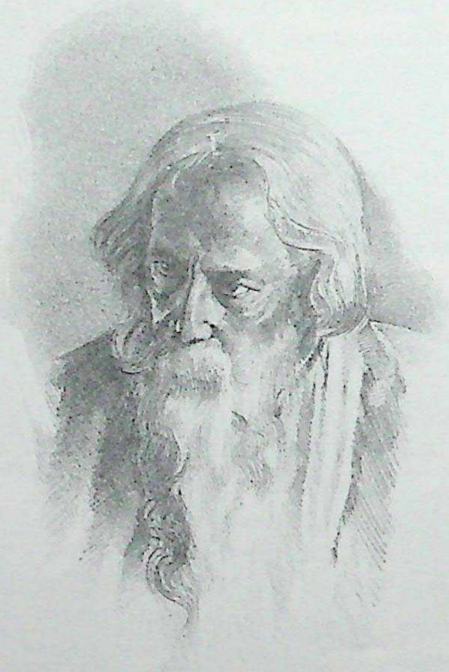
correctness and completeness of this *bhunoing*, depends the success or failure of the curry. Another technique which is special to Indian food in the *Baghaar*. Oil or ghee is heated to smoking point and the chosen spices are dropped in. They begin to pop, swell or brown immediately and the seasoned oil is then poured over the dal, vegetables or whatever, giving the dish a flavour that is subtle but incomparable.

Although Indian food varies so much, everywhere from North to South, chutneys, pickless and*Achars* are always served with every meal. These may be extremely hot, like the Andhra red chilli pickle or very mild and even sweet. Every community makes their own type of pickle and all sorts of fruit, vegetable and even meat and fish can be made into pickles or *Achars* and stored in glass or porcelain jars. The Anglo-Indians have invented some of the best pickles and their brinjal pickle with cashewnuts and garlic is excellent with all meats and curries. All over the country, some form of mango pickle is made, sweet and sour, mild or chilli hot. Gooseberries, limes, radishes, apples, tamarind, plums, apricots, garlic, walnuts, lotus stems, tomatoes, mixed vegetables and meat, eggs, and fish are made into pickles to eat with one's every-day food. Fresh coriander and coconut chutney spice up with green chillis and the juice of limes is a favourite with all South Indian food. My mother made her own version of green mango pickle every year, and all of us would carry away great jars of it to our own homes. It needed no preservative, no chemicals to keep it from going mouldy, and with the addition of slivers of garlic, chunks of candied peel and sugared ginger, it was, and is, the most delicious chutney I have ever eaten. It could be made as mild or as hot as wanted with the addition of ground red chillis. A spoonful added to mince, dals, stews or curries gave each dish an intangible flavour, enhancing but never detracting from the original flavours.

Indians also eat salads, *Raitas* (a yoghurt-based preparation mixed with raw or cooked vegetables) and *Papars* or *Poppadums* as an accompaniment to each meal. For Indian immigrants, nostalgia for Indian food remains perennial and wherever they have settled, Indian stores have sprung up to cater to their special needs.

INDIAN LITERATURE

HARISH TRIVEDI



Rabindranath Tagore, India's greatest poet.

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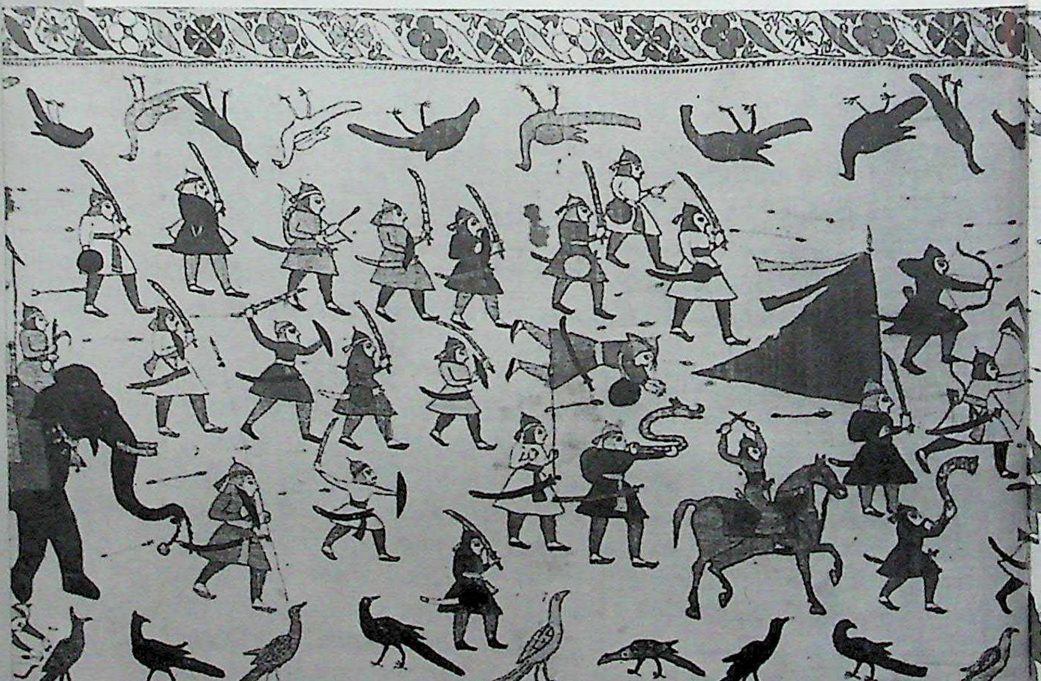
INDIANS living abroad are sometimes asked if they speak 'Indian' at home. There is of course no one Indian language but, instead, two national languages (Hindi and English), fourteen state languages and twenty-two literary languages in which the Sahitya Akademi (the National Academy of Letters) annually awards prizes. There is, thus, no one Indian literature in the sense that there is an English or a French literature. On the other hand, Indian literature is not quite comparable with a continental conglomerate like African or European literature, for there is a vital difference; neither Africa nor Europe has known a historical and cultural cohesion such as India has. The considered wisdom on the subject, therefore, is that (in a formulation favoured by the Sahitya Akademi) Indian Literature is one, though written in many languages.

To say so, as it happens, is to evoke a *mantra* (magic aphorism) from the oldest Indian literary text, the *Rigveda*, which declares that Truth is one, though the wise express it in various ways. The phrase comes down to us echoing through a corridor 3,500 years long, and illustrates how an ancient yet continuous literary tradition lies behind much that is written in India today. Sanskrit as a medium of literary creation extends about as far before Christ as after, Tamil has an unbroken literary history of over two thousand years, and a dozen other Indian languages have a literary tradition of about a thousand years each.

To map out quickly this vast literary terrain, it may be suggested that Indian literature falls into three broad periods, even as it is constituted of three distinct kinds of subject-matter. In the first phase, beginning around 1500 BC and extending up to around 1000 AD, the ancient Aryan culture of India, whether Hindu, Buddhist or Jain, finds expression in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali texts. In the second phase, with the arrival of the Muslims in India, a Perso-Arabic element is introduced both in content and form. The classical languages now fade away as the modern languages arise and flourish. The third phase, in which the seeds are sown around 1820 AD with the consolidation of British rule in India but begin to bear cultural fruit only after the 'Mutiny' of 1857, is the on-going modern period. During it, not only has the influence of English (and Western) literature permeated the literature written in all Indian languages, but an increasingly visible band of Indians has also begun producing literature directly in English.

The earliest Sanskrit literature is scriptural, mythological and epical. As there is no one holy book of Hinduism, the four *Vedas*, the eleven major *Upanishads*, the two early epics and the eighteen *Puranas* are all regarded as equally sacred, and all these have unmistakable literary merit as well. The oldest and the best *Veda* is the *Rigveda*, a collection of a little over one thousand hymns or odes addressed to seventy-nine different deities which include the earth, the sky, space, the sun, the moon, the dawn, clouds, winds, fire and the oceans. These poems express

The battle of Kurukshetra, the great confrontation of good and evil which is the central event of the "Mahabharata". Chamba wall hanging, 18 th century.



wonder and even awe at the fresh splendours of creation, and indulge in some speculation as to who the creator might be : "Who is the God to whom we shall offer oblation?"

In contrast, the *Upanishads* are the thinking man's scriptures. They contain lively dialogues on metaphysical matters broadly reminiscent of Plato, and vivid parables with suggestive meanings. In the *Katha-upanishad*, a precocious child presses Yama, god of death, to answer three searching questions concerning life and death. In the *Brihadaranyaka* are found some great debates between a king and a sage, and between the sage and his two wives, the one domestic and the other intellectual. This *Upanishad* also contains the little parable of the Thunder uttering the ambivalent syllable DA, which T.S. Eliot exploited at some length towards the conclusion of *The Waste Land*.

But it is the two epics, the gigantic *Mahabharata* by Vyasa (around 900 BC), at over 200,000 lines, probably the longest poem in the world, and the more artistically organized *Ramayana* by Valmiki (around 700 BC), which have proved to be the fountain-head of Indian culture and the inexhaustible source-books of subsequent Indian literature. Together, they have shaped the conscience of the race. The dramatic story of the eighteen-day war involving the five Pandava brothers and their indomitable wife Draupadi against their one hundred Kaurava cousins contains stirring action, while it also achieves in the midst of all the raging storm some still moments of philosophic profundity. One such frozen frame is Lord Krishna's call to action to the unnerved hero Arjuna, moments before the battle is to begin; this 1400-line exposition of what is illusion and what is the truth, and how one should perform the right duty without coveting its fruit, is better known as the *Bhagavadgita*. Another scene which makes a moral point is the chastening final journey up the Himalayas by the Pandavas after they have won back their kingdom and their glory and then renounced it.

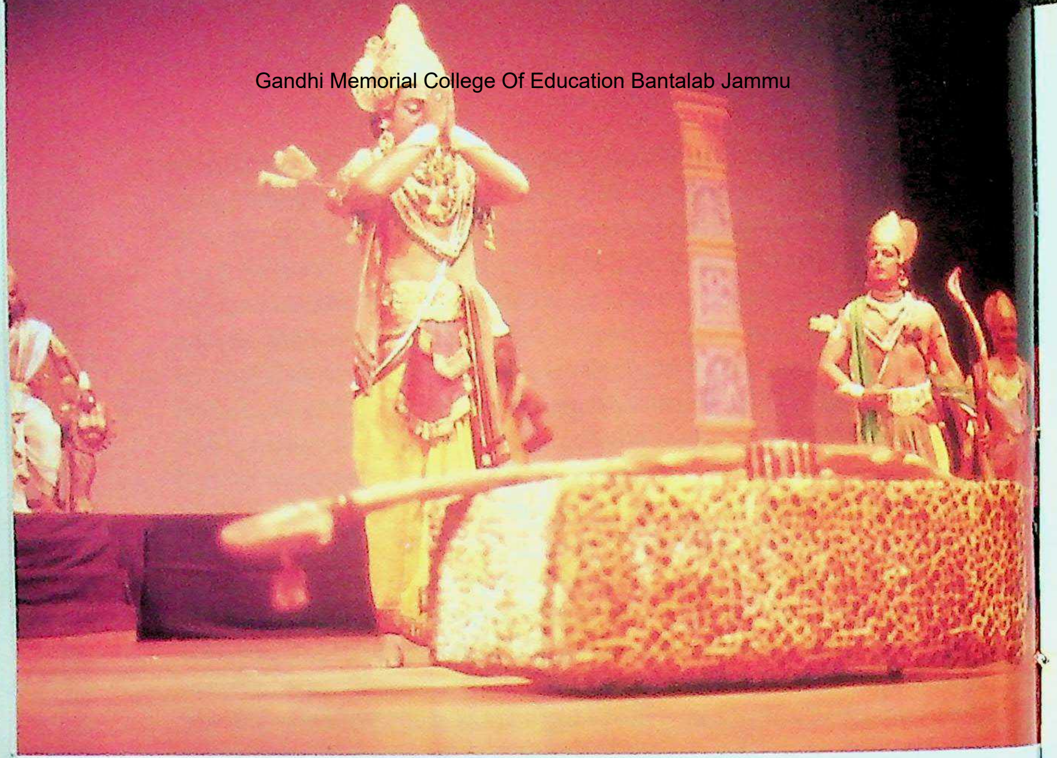
The *Ramayana*, i.e. the story of Rama, too has a war between the forces of good and evil and a long exile in the forest leading up to the war. But the human incarnation of God in it, Rama, has come to be regarded as the last word in virtue, nobility and equanimity, and altogether the perfect and ideal specimen of humanity. In contrast, the other great incarnation Krishna, who comes across as an astute statesman in the *Mahabharata*, was later celebrated mainly as an endearingly naughty child, and then as the irresistible adolescent lover of hundreds and thousands of milk-maidens in his native village of Vrindavana. In later literature, both Rama and Krishna are used as divine pegs on whom to hang very human emotions. So are the legends surrounding Shiva, the volatile dancing god of creation and destruction, and his consort who represents the divine principle of female power and is called by the many names of Durga, Parvati, Shakti and Kali. All these figures may be gods in religion but they are treated as human enough in literature; they have been not only the objects of worship but also the stuff of legend and imagination.

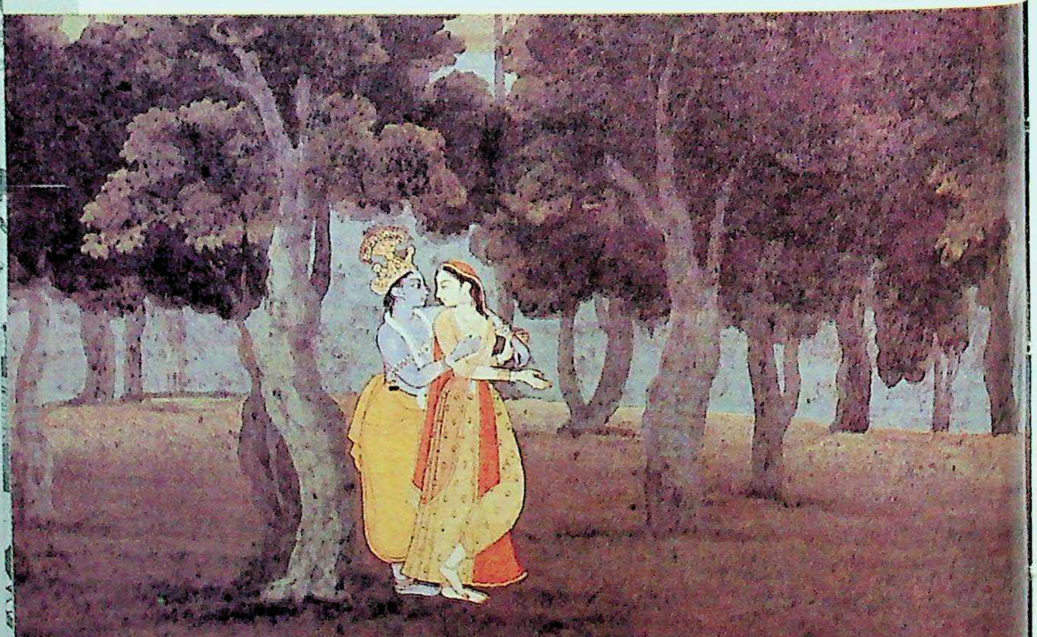
In secular Sanskrit literature, the biggest name is that of Kalidasa (5th century AD). Of his two epics, the longer

Raghuvamsha describes the dynasty of Rama, and the shorter *Kumarasambhava* celebrates the wedding of Shiva and Parvati and their union in their lofty picturesque abode, "the divine-souled Himalayas." His masterpiece is the play *Shakuntala*, a romantic tragicomedy involving a tender-hearted forest maiden and a king who then goes away and under a curse forgets her. But perhaps the most original and popular work of Kalidasa is the *Meghaduta* (The Cloud Messenger), in which a banished newly-wed lover sights a likely cloud on the exhilarating first day of the monsoon and begs it to carry a message to his beloved wife pining in their fabled city of Alakapuri in the Himalayas. The first half of the poem gives an enchanting cloud's eye-view of the changing landscapes of central and north India, and the second half describes in sensuous and glittering detail the pining lady, still ravishing in her attenuation. Though he mainly wrote epics and plays, Kalidasa's genius was essentially lyrical. He delights constantly with his apt similes and he is the master of sweet elaboration of the softly unfolding sentiment. Many readers including Western orientalists have regarded him as the greatest Indian poet ever, and the one who expresses best the characteristic Indian sensibility. In colonial times, in proud patriotic counter-assertion, he was often claimed by Indian scholars to be the Shakespeare of India.

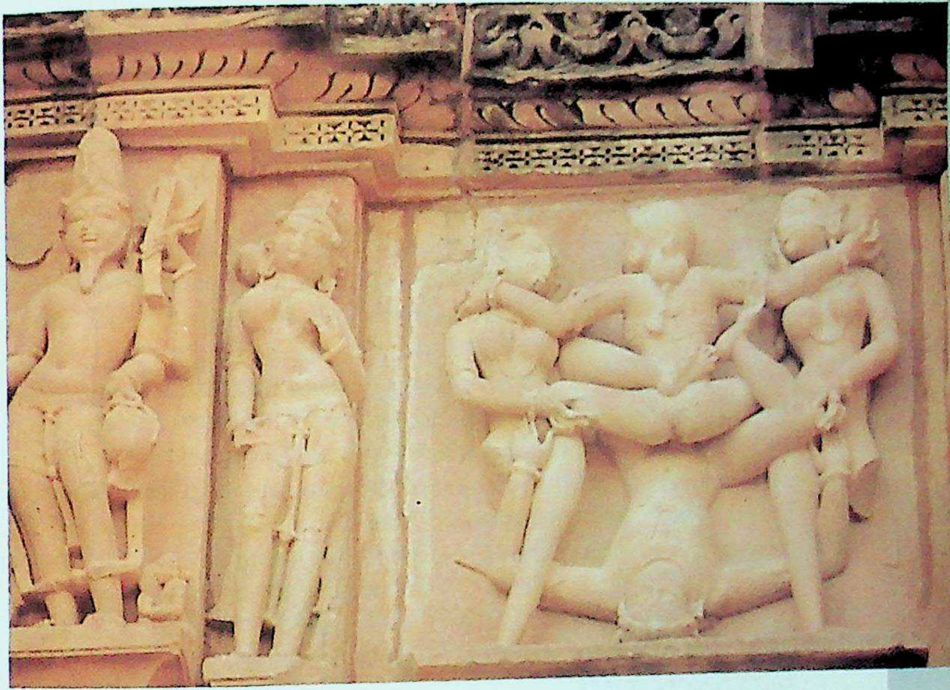
Among other classics of Sanskrit literature is an epic life of the Buddha by Ashvaghosha (1st century AD) which inspired many of the later retellings including Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*. *Mrichchhakatikam* (The Little Clay Cart), a play by King Shudraka (6th century), which has often been revived in modern times, depicts the love between a ruined merchant and a golden-hearted courtesan against a politically turbulent setting. *Uttararamacharitam* (The Later Life of Rama) by Bhavabhuti (680-730) makes a poignant feminist plea on behalf of Rama's ill-treated, slandered and cruelly banished wife Sita. It is perhaps the best of all the many Sanskrit plays which sympathetically retell the story of the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* from the point of view of a character other than the protagonist.

Of the many witty moralistic fables arranged in a cycle or a box within a box, the most delightful are to be found in the *Panchatantra* (4th century) by Vishnu Sharma, a work which had earlier travelled to the West through translations into Pehalvi,





Above : A theatrical presentation of mythological epic "Ramayana".
Below: Jayadeva's "Gita Govinda" the story of the ecstatic union of Lord Krishna and Radha
An opaque watercolour "Love in a dark wood".



Erotic-Yogic pose, shown in a sculpture panel at Kandariya Mahadev Temple, Khajuraho 11th century A D.

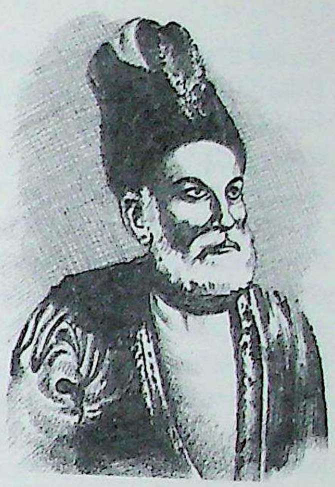
Syrian and Arabic. *Dashakumaracharita* (The Story of the Ten Princes) by Dandin (660-710) offers a distinctly roguish version of contemporary society, while *Kadambari* by Bana Bhatta (7th century) is simply the great Sanskrit novel, psychologically subtle and stylistically elegant. (After it, the very form of the novel is called *Kadambari* in several Indian languages.) A favourite form of poetry in which a number of stanzas (usually one hundred) are linked not by a narrative thread but by a common theme was perfected by Bhartrihari (7th century), who composed a *shataka* or century of verses each on public conduct, erotica and renunciation. The century of verses by Amaruka (8th century),is devoted to amorous matters alone, as were the seven hundred verses in Prakrita composed or collected by King Hala (3rd century), the *Gathasaptashati*; the difference is that while Amaruka describes sophisticated urban lovers, Hala's verses are all spoken by common village women. One of the last great Sanskrit texts is the *Gitagovinda* (Song of Krishna) by

Jayadeva (13th century), in which the love between the milk maiden Radha and Krishna is described in songs of mellifluous erotic intensity. Indeed, the *Gitagovinda* is the very Khajuraho of Indian literature it makes that rather over-rated sociological treatise, the *Kama Sutra* by Vatsyayana, read like a report by Masters and Johnson.

In Tamil, the second oldest Indian language, the early 'Sangam' literature shows rich variety. The poetry has come down in the form of eight anthologies by hundreds of minor poets, and ten long poems by eight major poets (3rd century AD). A work which still retains immense appeal is the *Kural* (6th century), comprising 1330 pearls of wisdom (in epigrammatic couplets of one and a half lines each) on *dharma* (personal conduct), *artha* (public affairs) and *kama* (love and sex). The first Tamil epic, *Shilappadikarma* (The Story of the Anklet; 9th century) by Ilago, though ostensibly about a little piece of jewellery, ranges widely over society and landscape. It is probably the first epic in the world to tell the story of a common man and woman, and its heroine Kannogi is a particularly spirited character.

The coming of the Muslims to India about one thousand years ago (900-1300 AD) brought in a whole new world-view, for they brought with them the Perso-Arabic literary tradition. Persian as the favoured language of the state and of high culture took deep roots; privileged children in North India were still lisping in it and even a Westernized poet such as Sir Mohmmad Iqbal was composing poetry in it well into the twentieth century. The Hindu-Muslim religious interaction bred many epic love-narratives in the mystical Sufi tradition. The best of these is Jayasi's *Padamavat* in Hindi(1540);Bengali version by Alaol, (17th century). In it the historical episode of the Muslim King Alauddin coveting the Rajput beauty Padmini and being repulsed by her husband Ratan Sena is systematically made to carry a higher spiritual meaning of man's yearning for God.

Out of the union of Hindi and Persian was also born a new language, the dainty half-caste Urdu, courtly and delicate, and best known for its elegant and highly wrought love poetry and praises of wine. It flourished mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries and served to indigenize many Persian themes and verse-forms, such as the *ghazal* (a series of loosely strung



Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib wrote movingly in Persian and Urdu. At times visionary, a man of immense charm.

together couplets), the *rubai* (as in Omar Khayyam, though in Persian each rubai stands free), the *qasida* (panegyric), the *mersia* (elegy) and the unique *shehr-a-shob* (dirge on the ruin of a city or an empire). Among the more cherished Urdu poets are Meer (1724-1810), with his artful emotional simplicity, Zafar (1775-1862; the last, exiled Mughal emperor) with his wistfulness and suggestive imagery, and the greatest of them all, Ghalib (1797-1867), with his sheer felicity, philosophy and wit.

But the dominant pan-Indian impulse of the Middle Period of Indian literature was something quite non-Islamic: *bhakti* (Hindu devotional) poetry. This represented both the Reformation and the Renaissance in India. The scriptural and ritualistic practices of 'high' Hinduism, monopolized by Brahmin priests, had grown increasingly exclusive and exploitative. Lower-caste poets, writing not in Sanskrit but in the people's languages, now opened up a revolutionary short-cut to God, through simple personal devotion. The many saint-composers of hymns to Shiva and to Vishnu in Tamil (7th-10th century) and Basavanna (1106-1168) and other composers of the prose-poem *vachanas* in Kannada (translated from both languages into English with distinction by A.K. Ramanujan) inaugurated the trend in South India. Dnaneshwar (1271-96), Namdev (1270-1350) and later Tuka Ram (1598-1650) contributed to it in Marathi, and the movement travelled up to blossom in the North in the four great *bhakti* poets of Hindi.

Of these, the most popular and deeply influential has been Tulsi Das (1532-1623), whose retelling of the Ramayana as the *Ramacharitamanasa* is distinctly more sublime and reverential than its Sanskrit source. George Grierson, the pioneering linguist, called it "the one Bible of a hundred million people, . . the perfect example of the perfect book." The blind poet Sur Das (1483-1563) sang sweetly of the winsome exploits of the child Krishna, and the rebel princess Mira Bai (1503-73) adored a more adult form of the same god with passionate all-renouncing devotion. But perhaps the most attractive of the Hindi *bhakti* poets today seems Kabir (1399-1518), the radical iconoclast who mocked the empty rituals of Hinduism and Islam alike. "If a stone (idol) can get me to God, let me go and worship a whole mountain." Or, "The mullah crows from on top of the mosque/ As if Allah were deaf."

During the heyday of *bhakti,* broadly between 1100 and 1700 AD, each modern Indian language had translated into it the *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Bhagavata-purana,* in many cases more than once. The versions of the Rama story by Kamban in Tamil, by Krittibas in Bengali, by Ezhuttachan in Malayalam and of course by Tulsi Das in Hindi are still among the greatest glories of literature in these languages, as are the retellings of the *Mahabharata* in Telugu by Nannayya, in Kannada by Pampa and in Oriya by Sarla Das. This seems natural in a tradition in which 'originality' and individuality in the Western sense have always been at a discount, and the poet's true vocation has been thought to be constantly to renew and reinscribe the eternal and the universal. *Sahitya,* the word for literature in many Indian languages, means being together, and such selfless cultural communality is reflected in the fact that hardly anything is known about many of the older Indian poets, often not even their name, for most wrote under pen-names which often occur in the last line of their verses.

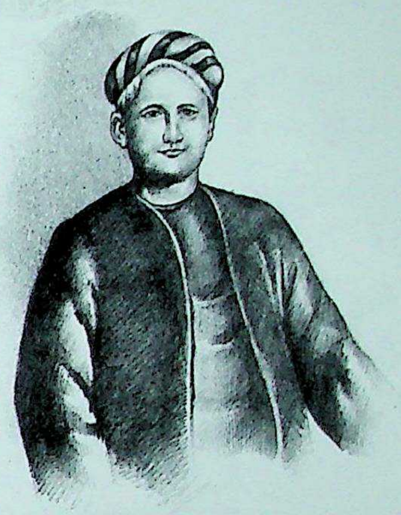
But even the eternal can be flogged to death, as was proved by many of the later *bhakti* poets. Thyagaraja (1767-1847) and Diksitar (1776-1835) in Telugu could compose well into the modern period fresh devotional lyrics which still form a staple of the culture of their regions, and Ramaprasad Sen in Bengal addressed the goddess Kali in a tone of fervour as well as robust, comic banter in songs set to his own original tune which are now an essential part of the Bengali sensibility. But the initial revolutionary passion of *bhakti* was well and truly spent by now in most other areas where the great majority of *bhakti* poets had already become over-ornate and effete. The terribly accomplished Bihari (1603-63), court-poet at Jaipur, wrote in Hindi his *Satasai* (collection of seven hundred couplets) on the love of Krishna and Radha whose main achievement lay in its relentless and tortuous punning, and Upendra Bhanja (1670-1740) in Oriya subjected the story of Rama to feats of even greater verbal jugglery. Poetic virtuosity now seemed to be its own soulless reward. To say that the time was ripe for a big literary wake-up may be to take unfair advantage of historical hindsight, but such was the literary situation when English and Western literature came to India.

It was in 1835 that the Lords Macaulay and Bentinck took one of the most influential decisions in the making of modern India: to introduce Western education through the medium of English. The Hindu (now Presidency) College had already been set up in Calcutta in 1817, but it was with the founding of the first three Indian universities in 1857 that the dissemination of Western culture began in earnest. The response was for some peculiar reason the most whole-hearted in Bengal, where the exuberant and erratically gifted Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) seemed to have acted as a kind of lightning-conductor. Infatuated with everything Western, he converted to Christianity, married an Englishwoman, travelled to England and France, and finally returned rueful and repentant to his native shore and language. His masterpiece is the sonorous epic in newly discovered blank verse, *Meghanadabadha* — yet another radical reinterpretation of the Rama story.

Another more influential Bengali writer who responded early to the new stimulus but harmonized it with deep-rooted indigenous instincts was the first major Indian novelist, Bankim Chandra Chaterjee (1838-94). He wrote historical romances in the manner of Walter Scott but imbued them with an anti-British political allegory, so that he is now seen by some historians as the father of Hindu nationalism. It is from his novel *Ananda Math* (The Abbey of Bliss) that the song "Bande Mataram" comes, which celebrated Bengal (and later by extension India)

Above : Film version of Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyaya's "Pather Panchali" directed by Satyajit Ray. Below : Dilip Kumar and Suchitra Sen in the film version of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's "Devdas" directed by Bimal Roy.

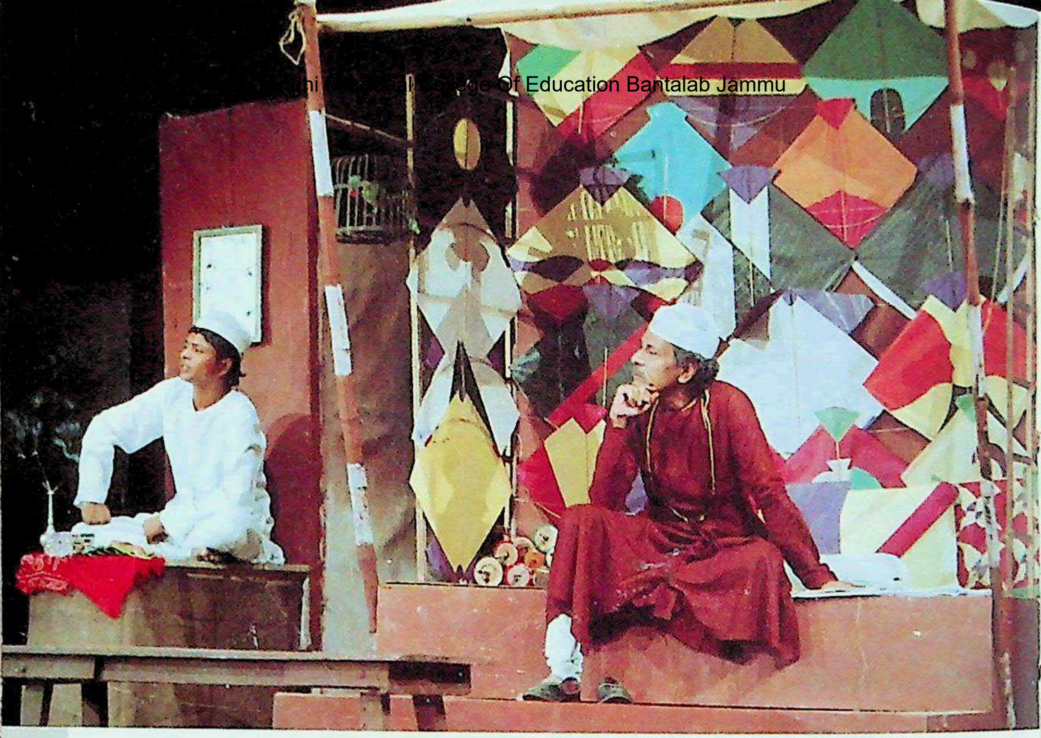
as one's (goddess) mother and which was sung as virtually the anthem of the Indian struggle for independence.

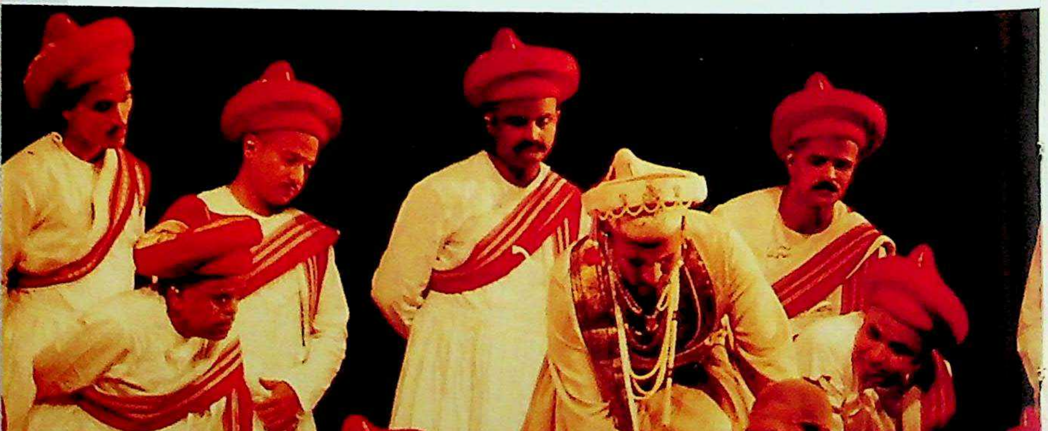


Bankim Chandra Chatterjee : His language has the strength, dignity and beauty of Sanskrit with the verve and vigour of the vernacular.

The Western kind of novel was a major new literary import. Early novels in several languages including Malayalam, Marathi, Hindi and Urdu, focussed on the lives and problems of women, to which the Indian conscience had been sensitized by exposure to Western ideas. But the twin themes which have provided the staple of the Indian novel in the 20th century have been, firstly, village life and the social changes attendant on a transition to modern urban living, and secondly, the national struggle for independence and the trauma of Partition. Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyaya's *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Road; 1929), a gentle evocation of a mode of rural life doomed to pass away, has achieved wider recognition through Satyajit Ray's trilogy of films. Sarat Chandra Chatterji (1876-1938) in his time had a more popular pan-Indian appeal than any novelist before him or since. He wrote of romantically unhappy wanderer heroes and of intensely anguished and sacrificing women (often widows), with the kind of open sentimentality which some people believe to be quite as typically Indian as irony and understatement are supposed to be typically British or Western.

The epoch-making realistic-idealistic influence of Gandhi is creatively refracted in the works of Premchand (1880-1936), the greatest novelist of Hindi and Urdu. His special gift was for brisk and sympathetic comic narration, and there is little in Indian fiction to match the scenes of North Indian village life in his many short stories and his last novel *Godan* (The Gift of a Cow). No less excellent are his two epics of the nationalist struggle for freedom, *Rangabhumi* and *Karma-bhumi*, while

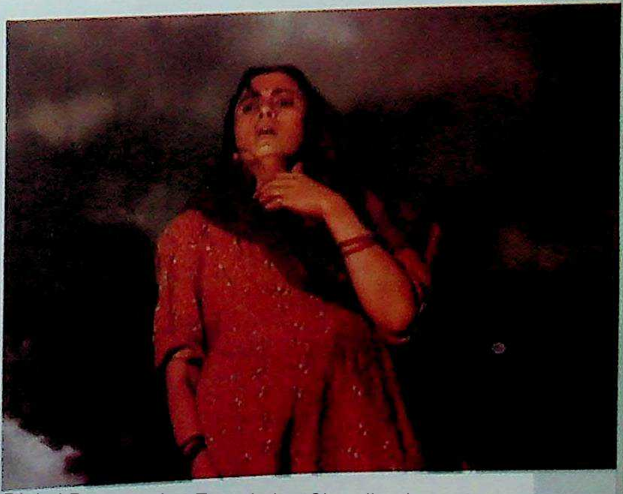




Above : Habib Tanvir in his play, "Agra Bazaar".
Below : "Ghashiram Kotwal" a play by Vijay Tendulkar.

Nirmala, his novel about a girl given in arranged marriage to a much older and dried up widower, who already has sons as old as she is, offers some complex sexual and psychological insights. A sort of update on Premchand is an acutely comic exposé of the shrewd play for power in a post-colonial village, in Shrilal Shukla's *Rag Darbari* (1968; tr. 1992); it is the Indian democratic state in miniature. Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974) is a moving account of the Partition, but the great novel on the theme, Yashpal's *Jhootha Sach* (The Truth that's a Lie), remains untranslated into English, with numerous other Indian classics.

Among modern Indian poets the greatest still is Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). His *Gitanjali* won him the Nobel Prize in 1913 and a knighthood in 1914; this selection of his Bengali songs (translated by himself) in the mystical-spiritual-devotional tradition was exactly what many people in the West imagined all Indian or oriental poetry to be like. But some other longer poems of his show astounding imaginative vigour and originality, while his best novels (*Gora, Home and Abroad*) address explicitly political themes. He had a privileged anglicized childhood, went on his first extended visit to England at the age of seventeen, and held an unwavering belief in the beneficial effects of British rule in India. Yet he was also the inheritor and enlightened re-interpreter of the ancient Indian tradition of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and Kalidasa (on whom he wrote a marvellous humorous poem). It is perhaps in this

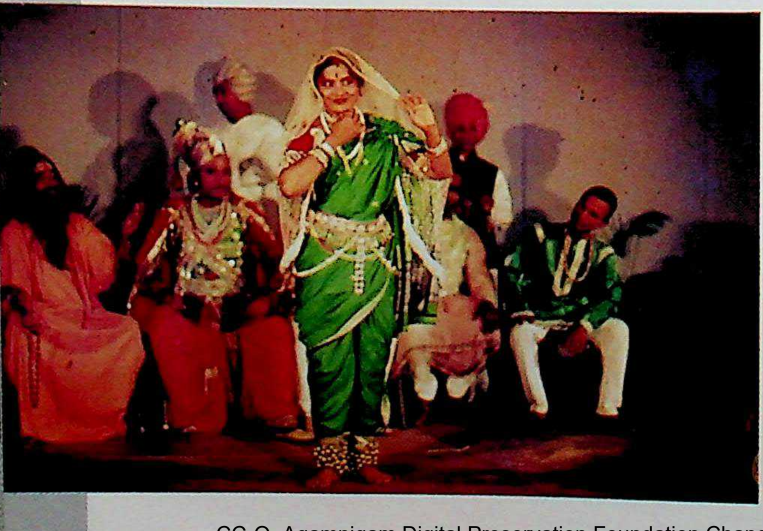


Bhisham Sahni's "Tamas".
A scene from the telefilm
by Govind Nihalani.

co - mingling of twin sensibilities that he is unique; most Indian writers since have tended to know their Shakespeare rather better than their Kalidasa.

The romantic strain in Tagore was derived partly from the 19th century English poets, from Shelley to Tennyson. The English Romantic poets exercized an enormous influence in other parts of India as well. In Kannada a translation by 'Shri' in 1926 of a selection from Palgraves's *Golden Treasury* inaugurated a whole new poetic movement. In Hindi, the four great *Chhayavadi* (romantic) poets who began writing in the 1920s still tower above all successors. It has been suggested that just as the narrative form of the Western novel gave us Indians a new notion of materialistic realism and linear chronology, even so Western romantic poetry thrilled us with a new conception of the individual self and of rebellious liberty.

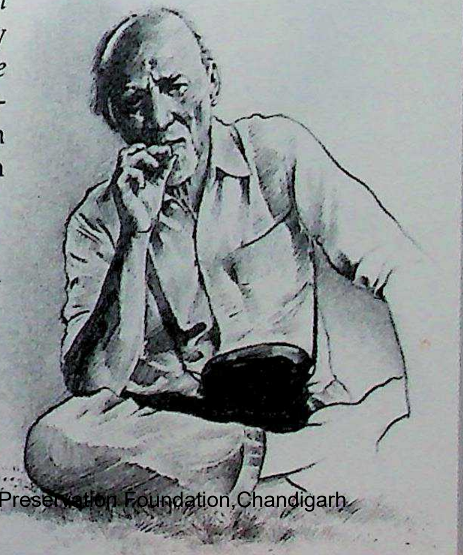
Indian poetry of the twentieth century was shaped by the impact of two other Western poetic movements, of which the first was the T.S. Eliot kind of modernism and the second the 1930s left-wing 'progressive' movement inspired by the Russian revolution. Among the major Indian poets who responded to either or even both of these alien impulses are Ajneya and Muktibodh (Hindi), Buddhadeva Bose and Vishnu De (Bengali), M. Gopalakrishna Adiga (Kannada) and Faiz Ahmad Faiz (Urdu).



"Tamasha", a theatrical folk form of Maharashtra.

Drama is often described as the weak — if not altogether missing — link of modern Indian literature. One vital reason for this lack is that there is little of a viable performative tradition anywhere outside Calcutta and Bombay. Also, there is a sharp cultural dichotomy here; while the modern Indian playwrights have been inevitably influenced by the austerely intellectual Ibsen-Shaw kind of dramaturgy, the living theatrical forms all over India are of the indigenous folk kind, in which drama is as much song and dance as it is plain prose: the *nautanki*, the *jatra*, the *tamasha*, the *yakshagana* and the *kathakali*. But many directors and even playwrights are now experimenting with blending the two modes. Among the more eminent playwrights of recent times are Badal Sarkar (*Evam Indrajit*), Mohan Rakesh (*Adhe Adhure*), Vijay Tendulkar (*Ghashiram Kotwal*), Girish Karnad (*Tughlaq*) and Mahesh Elkunchwar (*Holi*). The more creative directors include B.V. Karanth (a Hindi *Macheth* in *Yakshagana*), Habib Tanvir (*Agra Bazaar* and *Charandas Chor* with a troupe of tribal actors) and the young Prasanna (*Uttararamacharitam* in Braj prose-and-verse, in *nautanki*).

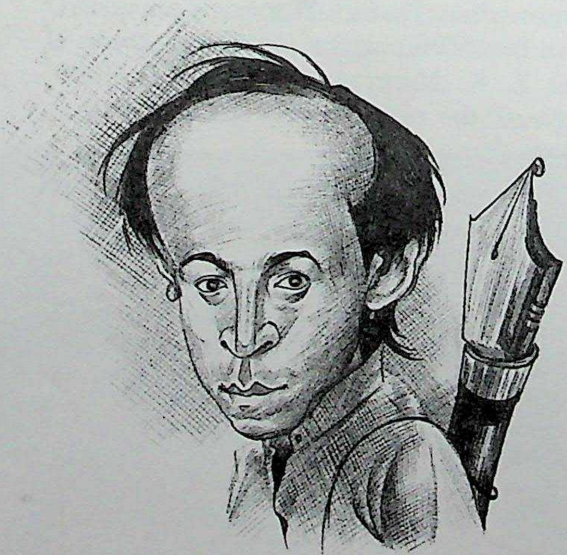
A direct and even natural consequence of Indians reading such quantities of literature in English was that a few of them should also wish to produce some. Three major novelists who began writing in English in the 1930s and are still going strong are the gently whimsical R. K. Narayan (*The Man-Eater of Malgudi, The World of Nagaraj*), the metaphysical-spiritual Raja Rao (*The Serpent and the Rope, On the Ganga Ghat*), and the robustly progressive Mulk Raj Anand (*The Coolie, Untouchable*). Their example was followed by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala who is Polish



Play wright and theatre activist Badal Sarkar brought theatre to the people, with his street plays.

by birth but was married to an Indian and resident here for over two decades and wrote best about the foreigner in India *(Heat and Dust, How I Became a Holy Mother)*, Anita Desai who explores the troubled sensibilities of intense upper class women *(Cry the Peacock, Clear Light of Day)*, and Arun Joshi whose heroes are very Westernized, very discontented and very much in quest of some Indian fulfilment *(The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, The Last Labyrinth)*. There have been about a dozen notable 'Indo-Anglian' poets, among them the austerely reflective Nissim Ezekiel, the late-romantic Dom Moraes, the ironical-nostalgic A.K. Ramanujan, the culturally stranded R. Parthasarathy and the high modernist Jayanta Mahapatra. But the question persisted if Indians *should* write in English, and whether they *could* express their innermost thoughts and feelings in an alien language or represent authentically in it characters and situations which themselves lay outside the narrow range of spoken English.

This question has not so much been answered as brushed aside by a newer group of sophisticated upper-middle-class writers who have all risen within the last decade, after the hapless Salman Rushdie made it big by winning the Booker Prize: Amitav Ghosh *(The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines)*, Vikram Seth *(The Golden Gate, A Suitable Boy)*, Alan Sealy *(Trotter-nama)* and Upamanyu Chatterji *(English August)*. In



Author Vikram Seth.

their use of English as well as in their use of Indian materials, in their themes and settings, and in their whole orientation, these writers are not so much apologetically Indian as they are confidently cosmopolitan. They publish under English and American imprints, they write in an international idiom, and they seek a worldwide readership. Parallel to this, there has recently been something of a boom in publishing translations into English of modern as well as older works from the Indian languages. Indeed, a great majority of the works mentioned in this essay are available in English translation, including even something presumably as untranslatable as Bihari's *Satasai.*

Shortly after independence, Prime Minister Nehru had pleaded for the retention of English in India on the grounds that it had a use as a 'link-language.' Now, books written by Indians in English as well as those translated into the common repository of English from the various Indian languages are beginning to serve as a link-literature as well. But as English is (to coin a phrase) not only an Indian language but also an international one, an Indian literature in English may not long remain merely Indian. Soon, possibly, in this age of global communication, there may not be much of an Indian literature left to speak of; there may only be a world literature in English, which may be all homogenized and one, though written in many parts of the world and in many Englishes.

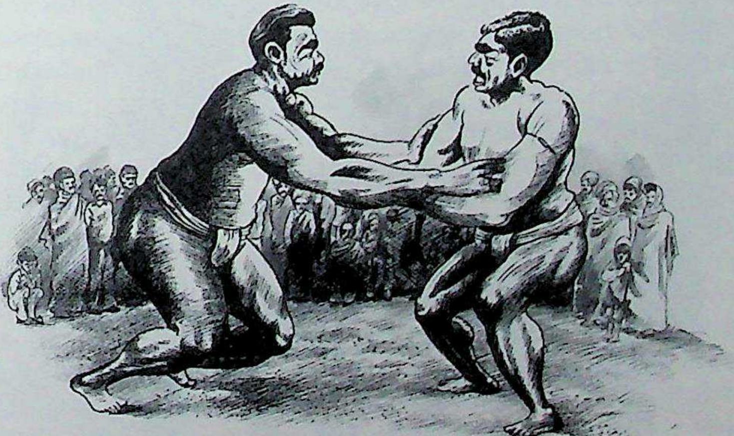
INDIAN SPORT : NO GOAL IN SIGHT

RAJDEEP SARDESAI

RAJDEEP SARDESAI has been working with The Times of India, Bombay, since 1988 as Assistant Editor and is now its Metropolitan Editor. He has written extensively on politics and sports for the editorial page and in the news pages.

SPORT in India, to borrow a Churchillian phrase, has remained a "mystery wrapped inside an enigma". The mystery has less to do with the singular failure of the world's second-most populous country to win an Olympic gold medal in any sport outside hockey. What remains perplexing though, and even infuriating, is the complete lack of a distinct sporting ethos in a country where socio-cultural processes have always been seen to encourage group activity.

This failure on the part of Indian sport to strike roots is a reflection of the numerous contradictions that are inherent in our society. Sport in this country retains an element of popular folk culture and yet is not detached from its modernizing influences. Thus, one finds *kushti* (wrestling) matches being played on *akharas* in which the whole village participates co-existing with freestyle wrestling contests that are organized in big city stadiums with no shortage of sponsorship. Indigenous sports like *kabaddi* and *kho-kho* still flourish in a few areas, even as one notices a remarkable adaptability to Western, rule-oriented games like cricket and football. Most Indians continue to view sport as primarily a leisure activity, i.e., a non-productive consumption of time and wealth. Only a small, but well-defined minority are being drawn to the more competitive aspects of sport.



Kushti (wrestling).

In a sense, the uneven growth of Indian sport symbolizes the variety of Indian society — a complex interplay of the class, caste, sex and rural-urban distinctions. The class biases can be seen in the manner in which certain sports, e.g., polo, were specifically created to cater to the needs of the princely classes and continue to be played in exclusive areas. Other sports like *gilli-danda* are characteristic of a game where participants were recruited from "common people", and which were played according to more traditional local conventions. If the prince had his polo, the pauper had his *kabaddi.*

The pyramidical structure of Indian sport can be evidenced in the relationship between the caste system and the evolution of sport. The Indian caste system isolated and preserved a great variety of recreational activity which sanctified the exclusivity of the upper castes. In Vedic India, for example, sport primarily had a martial character. The prominent sports of the day were chariot-racing, bull-fighting, archery and hunting. This focus on the physical and war-like attributes of sport meant that the Kshatriyas were seen as the "sporting caste". The Brahmins at the top of the social hierarchy chose to adopt a more selective

attitude towards leisure activity while preferring games and pastimes that required a small number of participants, little direct physical contact and enjoyment in exclusive surroundings, e.g., chess and dice.

It would be true to say that the exclusion of tribals, women and untouchables from the epicentre of village life extended to the sports field also. The story of Ekalavya in the *Mahabharata* is well-documented. By forcing him to cut off his finger in *guru-dakshina,* Dronacharya denied the tribal boy the chance to compete on equal terms with the princes in archery. There are also very few records of Indian women taking part in sporting activity. Their role was often confined to the more relaxed, artistic pastimes like singing and dancing.

This inherently inegalitarian nature of Indian sport has proved to be a fairly resilient legacy. Certain sports, like tennis, billiards (where India has produced two world champions) and badminton, are still only available to those who are members of private clubs. This "club culture" fits in with an ascriptive, stratified Indian society, where status and access to facilities is still largely dependent on birth and not talent.

Again, physical contact sports continue to be shunned by the upper classes. It is not a coincidence that sports like football have flourished in states like Bengal and Kerala, where social foment has a long history. Nor is it entirely surprising to find cricket being well-received by the upper-middle-class trading community, since the elitist moorings of the sport fitted in with time-honoured notions of "pollution" through social interaction.

Women, too, have found it difficult to make the leap from the kitchen to the playing fields. Here again, there is a definite equation between the pace of social reform and increased women's participation in sport. That almost all of India's leading women athletes hail from Kerala is largely due to the fact that the state has taken the lead in the field of women's emancipation. A majority of women athletes also come from urban and semi-urban areas where the forces of social change have helped alter various prejudices and stereotypes. The irony though is that the stratified nature of Indian sport has not diluted its appeal as a form of mass entertainment. Many Westerners are puzzled at the sight of millions of Indians turning up to watch sports matches, even where on occasion they are not aware of the rules of the game, nor is there any local interest. For example, why was the Eden Gardens packed to capacity when Australia met England in the 1987 cricket World Cup finals? In the United States, few sports outside of baseball, basketball and American football would attract large crowds. In this country, any sporting contest, especially in mofussil areas, becomes a grand public affair.

The answer to the "spectatoritis" phenomenon that is quite uniquely Indian is to be found in the second enduring legacy that has shaped the evolution of Indian sport — a cultural legacy that regards sporting activity as an integral part of social life. Thus, although historically certain sports may have been available only to an elite few, the hoi-polloi showed remarkable ability to integrate sport in their own social environs. If the kings enjoyed elephant fights, the "commoners" chose to adapt this pastime to suit their surroundings by organizing cock-fights.

Indeed, although paternalism and deference existed between the rulers and the ruled, sports continued to provide an opportunity for popular gatherings. For example, aristocrats in pre-British India did not wrestle and pugilists were drawn from the ranks, but both wrestling and boxing enjoyed royal patronage. One way to attract the attention of a king was to excel in a sport.

Just as the Greeks devised the Olympic Games as an offering to the Gods in which the entire population participated, so were Indian sports events tied to the rituals and religious festivities of the day. The sport of Jalikattu, which saw young men literally taking the bull by the horns and wrestling with it, is still celebrated during the Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu. Even today, the boat race in Kerala is held during the Onam festival, while *kabaddi* and *malkhamb* competitions are often organized during a religious festival in Maharashtra.

These social aspects of sport are vital in a country where there are limited avenues of popular entertainment. In this respect, the attraction for sport is not very different from that for films. They are both seen as leisure activities that encourage group behaviour, social interaction and, at the same time, provide an affordable release from the humdrum of everyday life. In the process though, sport is viewed as a multi-faceted activity, which does not exist as a discrete form of recreation but is tied with the entire gamut of socio-religious and political activities, and merges with them as part and parcel of popular culture.

If there has been any move towards evolving a semblance of a sporting ethos, then that has been the fall-out of the third important legacy which has shaped Indian sport. This is the legacy bequeathed to us by the British. The notion of "playing games and sports" must be fitted into the context of India's colonial development. In fact, hardly any ball games existed in India until the British arrived, and it is striking to find the readiness of the Indians to "adopt" British games for their own. The princes took to polo (the Western version) and the blood sports; those who lived in the cantonment areas near Lahore and Meerut, and the Anglo-Indians, plumped for hockey; the upper-middle-class Indians, especially the Parsees of Bombay, chose cricket; the spirited Bengali *bhadralok* preferred football.

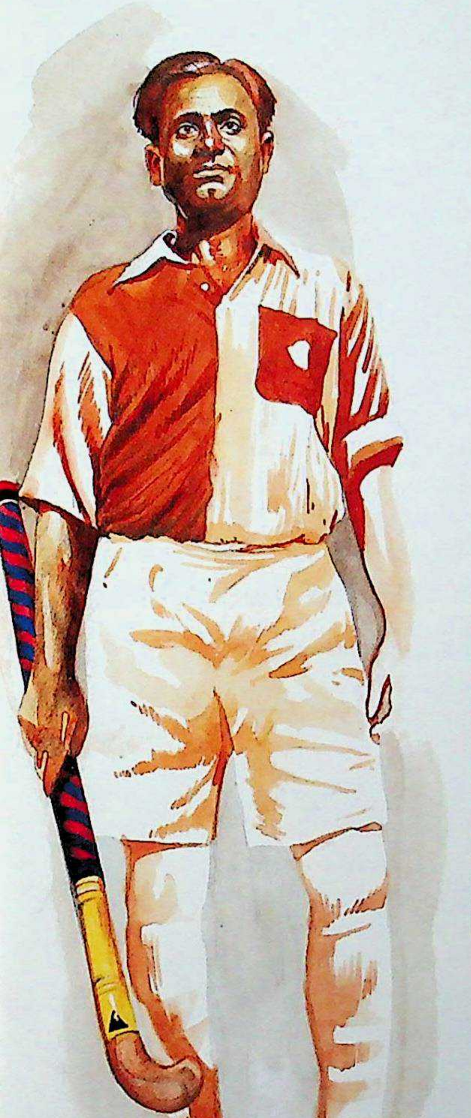
Imperialism, Education and Games were an Imperial Trinity sacred to the upper-class Victorian educator. The purpose of the proselytization and diffusion around the globe of 19th century British games was the inculcation of manliness. Among early Victorians, this concept represented the virtues of seriousness, self-denial and rectitude; as understood by late Victorians, it denoted robustness, perseverance and stoicism. The chosen medium for fostering these virtues was team games. It was for this reason that the so-called "games ethic" — the ideal of character training through games -- held pride of place in colonial society.

This concept of the "games ethic" served as a political expedient to ensure retention of the jewel in the crown. After the 1857 Mutiny in particular, the British learned the importance of wooing the masses through benevolent imperialism. Learning the English language and playing English games was seen to be crucial to bringing the indigenous people within the imperial umbrella, apart from spreading the "moral" values of loyalty and deference. The outcome of it was a unique phenomenon: suddenly, in the most bizarre locations in India were found potent symbols of pedagogic imperialism — football and cricket pitches. When the Parsees and the Muslims played the English cricketers at Karachi at the turn of the century, the British historian, Sir Theodore Cooke, argued, "By such threads are the bonds of union woven."

Weaving these threads together was the English public school system. It was within these public schools that an Indian elite first learned his cricket at one such public school under the tutelage of Mr Macnagthen, the school's master (see box). Around 1906, there were three cricket elevens and three football elevens at Mayo College, Ajmer. Even today, the "games ethic" flourishes among Indian public schools, even if their contribution to representative sport in the country has been disappointing.

Indeed, the manner in which the British planted in a tropical soil a foreign seed, which slowly grew into a sturdy miniature of a much larger English plant, provides a fascinating illustration of the cultural diffusion of an educational ethic arising out of imperial conquest. What is even more fascinating is the eagerness which Indians show to adapt to a variety of English sport. The English Football Association was started in 1863, and just over 25 years later its Indian counterpart was born. By the end of the 19th century, full-fledged hockey tourneys were being organized in the country, while the Parsees were playing cricket matches against the Europeans in the 1870s. This is in marked contrast to other colonial countries like Australia and Canada which were very selective in their choice of games. Australia for example played little football, and even hockey was introduced to that country only recently by Anglo-Indian immigrants. The East African countries stayed away from cricket.

The reason why Indians took to almost every British sport so quickly must lie in the psyche of the Indian elite at the time. The neo-anglicized Indian was determined to be associated with the social life of his colonial masters. Sport enabled him to achieve a measure of social acceptability in British society, possibly to an even greater extent than learning the English language did. Not surprisingly, it was the Indian princes and bureaucrats who took the lead in playing sport. This class was missing in other colonial countries. For those working in the British army too, excelling in sport became one way of attracting the attention of their superiors. Some of the finest Indian hockey players, including that incredible ball wizard, Dhyan Chand, were Army men.



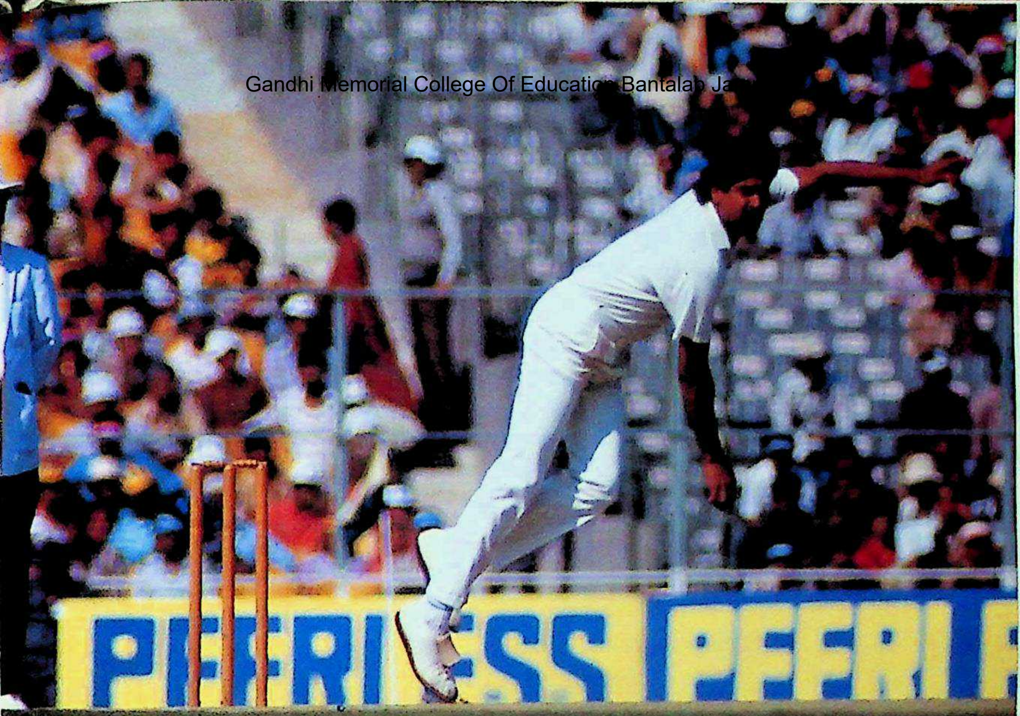
Dhyan Chand - the greatest player the game of hockey has ever known.
Inset : Today the game has lost its dazzle and artistry, as also India's dominance

It was only much later that sport in India assumed nationalist overtones. The turning point was possibly the 1911 victory of Mohun Bagan Football Club over the East Yorks Regiment, that enabled it to become the first Indian team to win the Indian Football Association shield. The victory over an English team was likened to bringing down the Union Jack from Fort William by enthusiastic supporters. Even so, an inferiority complex continued to haunt Indian sport for many years when playing the white man, with hockey being the one glorious exception.

The early indigenous patrons of modern sport were also quite unable to move out of the shadow of the British. For example, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was the first real princely patron of sport in the country. In the 1920s, his durbar was littered with imported talent who would provide entertainment to his people and impart some of their skills at the same time. While he undoubtedly did a great deal to promote sport in the country, the motivation would appear to have been less patriotic, and more in the nature of fulfilling his princely responsibilities. In that sense, he was not very different from the British who also saw spreading the games ethic in their colonies to be their "obligation".

Yet, despite being an essentially imperialist creation, modern Indian sport has outlived the Raj. No sport has done this successfully than cricket which has emerged as the country's number one mass spectator sport. This might seem surprising at first. After all, an expensive sport like cricket would seem to be ill-suited to a poor country like ours. By contrast, football and hockey would appear to be ideal working-class games. But, as said earlier, sport in India has always had a feudal, and not working-class, character. Cricket, with its inherently feudal structure, represents more than any other game, the confluence of the imperialist and traditional legacies that have shaped Indian sport.

The game itself is highly stratified with the batsmen at the top and the fielders at the bottom of the hierarchy. In the early years, it was not unusual to find princes doing the batting, and leaving their servants to do the fielding. The rules and rituals of cricket, right from the toss of the coin, were quickly learned by the upper castes to establish their superiority over the rest.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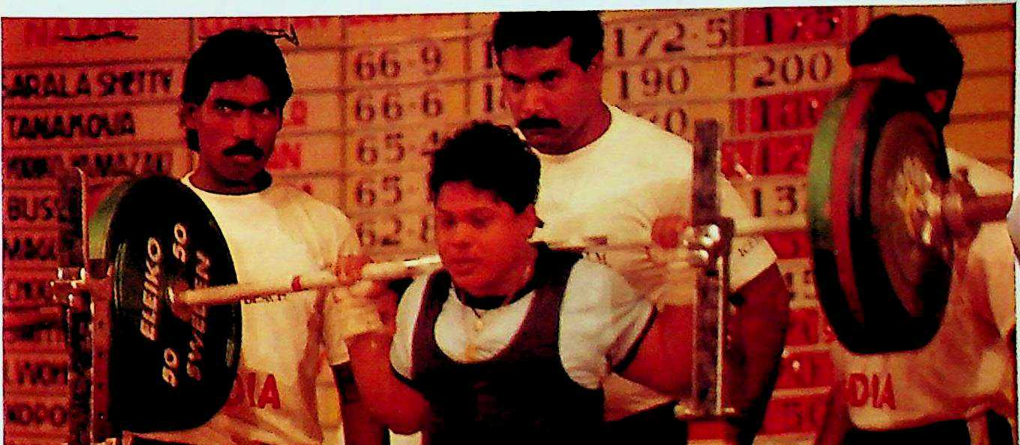


Above : Kapil Dev, one of the greatest all-rounders of all time, in cricket.
Below : Sumita Laha, champion woman power-lifter.

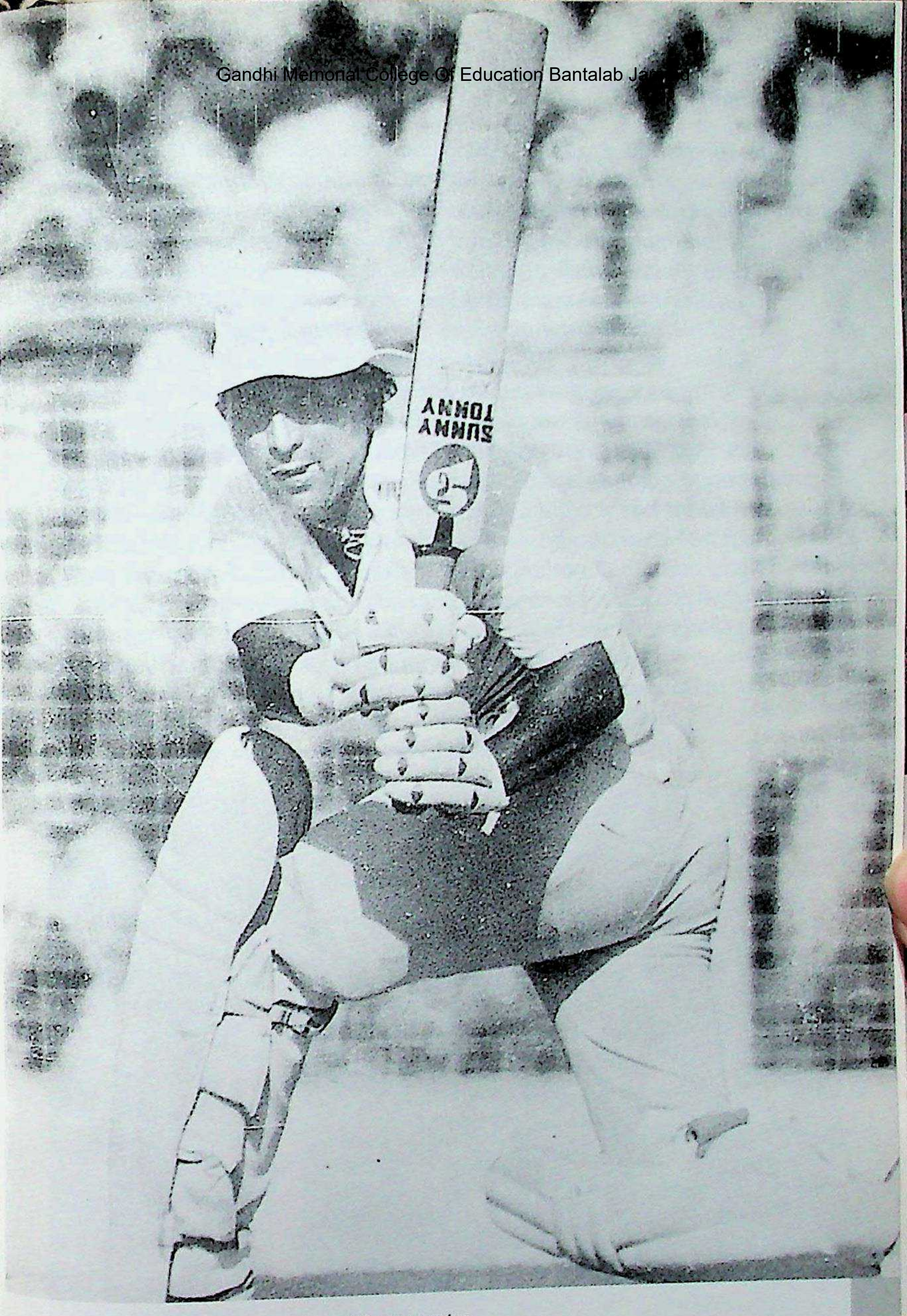
Cricket, with its white flannel uniform and little physical contact, was thought to be a "pure" and "non-polluting" game. By contrast, rugby was the one British sport shunned by Indians since it was overly physical and played on muddy turf. There is also a certain timelessness and cyclical nature of movement in cricket that fits in with the Indian concept of time and motion. An analogy with the success of long-winding Hindi motion pictures can be made.

Yet, while being feudal in origin, cricket has also made the transition to modern, urbanized and industrialized society. This society prefers watching sport that is mass-based, exciting and highly competitive at the same time. The contest is to be seen less in festive terms, but more as a combat of national proportions which can help alleviate class and religious tensions in a legitimate manner. To that extent, sports plays a key role in an individual's and indeed a nation's search for an identity, especially at a time when other integrative and mobilizing forces are in a crisis.

Cricket has this national dimension which enables it to be watched enthusiastically by millions. Football also has this quality, but the failure to produce a top-class national football team has limited its appeal. On the other hand, the "native" sports of India like *gilli-danda* and *kabaddi* are too rudimentary and "downmarket" to be watched by a large, sophisticated audience. Indoor sports likes table-tennis are confined by space constraints, while wrestling is considered to be too localized (unlike in Japan, where Sumo wrestling has a nationwide audience).

The relationship between national identity and sport has been highlighted in the course of India and Pakistan sporting contests. Some of the jingoism underlying the belligerent crowd behaviour in such matches is understandable. With armed conflict no longer a realistic solution, the idea of a sports field serving to right all the inequities of a bygone period has become increasingly attractive. What cannot be forgiven though is the manner in which the majority community in both countries of the subcontinent use the results of such matches to establish their hegemony over the minorities in their respective countries.

Indeed, the massification of sport has had its positive and negative effects. On the positive side, it has enabled "sport" to


SUNNY TONNY

Sunil Manohar Gavaskar : The cricketing genius.

be integrated more fully with the marketplace and legitimized it as an area of open competition and entrepreneurial activity. As a result, many private companies have become the modern-day patrons of Indian sport. Sportsmen are thus more inclined to see sport as a full-time professional career, as well as a means of achieving social mobility. The successful Indian sportsman is idolized, none more so than the test cricketer. The world's highest run-getter, Sunil Gavaskar, for example, has achieved fame and status that can be matched only by a celluloid star.

Yet, the transition from the maidan to the market has been imperfect. Outside of cricketers, few sportsmen receive national recognition. Sponsorship for hockey and football is ..... while the private sector is willing to employ cricketers on their staff, other national-level sportsmen do not always get the same facility. More often than not, it has been left to the public sector and the armed forces to provide employment to "lesser sport" players. Again, some sportsmen, especially cricketers, lured by the power of Mammon, have allowed commercialization to get the better of commitment.

For these imperfections, the Indian state machinery is the main culprit. While controlling practically every major sports body in the country, they have done everything possible to prevent a composite sporting culture from emerging. The sports budget for 1991-92 was around Rs 70 crores. In a nation of over

Flood-lit view of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.

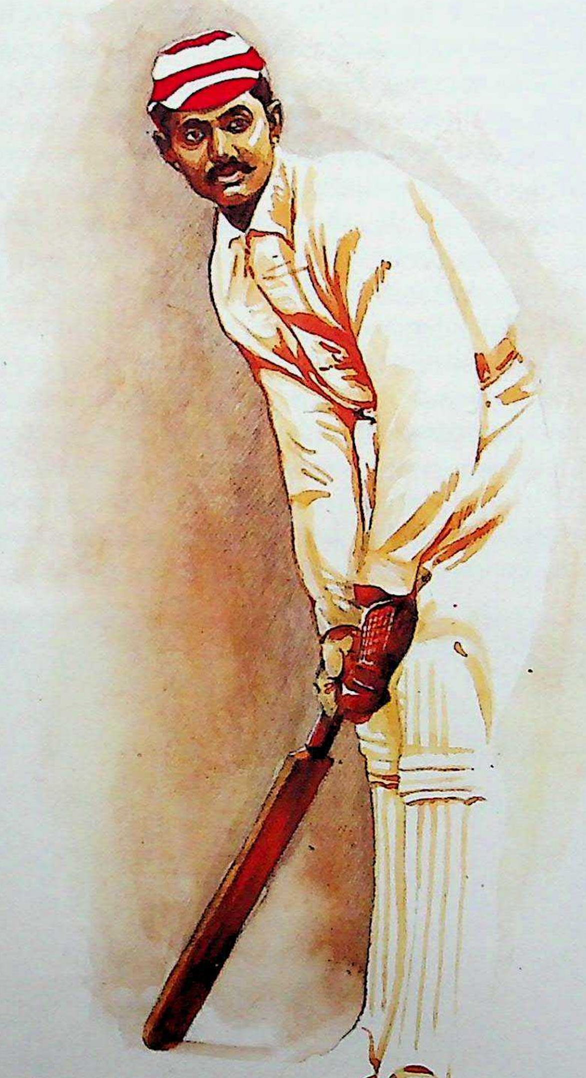
300 million people that works out to less than one rupee per head being spent on sport.

Even this money had been badly spent with the sole exception of the Special Areas Games scheme started recently (see box). Huge stadia have been built in metros which have only ensured that sport remains an urban, upper-class privilege. Officials with little sporting background are allowed to freely travel on foreign junkets, even as Indian athletes are denied access to top-class competition. The politicians — the country's new maharajas — head virtually every sports organization in the country. Worst of all, the Indian state has failed to appreciate the crucial underlying relationship between sports and health. Any serious system of public health would address itself to the question of popularizing sporting activity, as has been the case in the countries of East Europe.

The end result is that Indian sport is caught in mid-pitch, with no distinct sporting ethos having evolved. Colonialism versus traditionalism, state versus society, amateur versus professional, privilege versus freedom, metro versus mofussil, the confrontations underlying Indian sport are too many and too complex to be easily resolved.

P.T. Usha : A world-class athlete.

RANJI AND THE RAJ



Kumar Shri Ranjitsinghji.

KUMAR Shri Ranjitsinhji (1872-1933), better known as "Ranji", was the first international sportsman produced by this country. The British historian, John Lord, went a step further and described Ranji as "the first Indian of any kind to become universally known and popular." That observation only highlights the importance of cricket in the Victorian era.

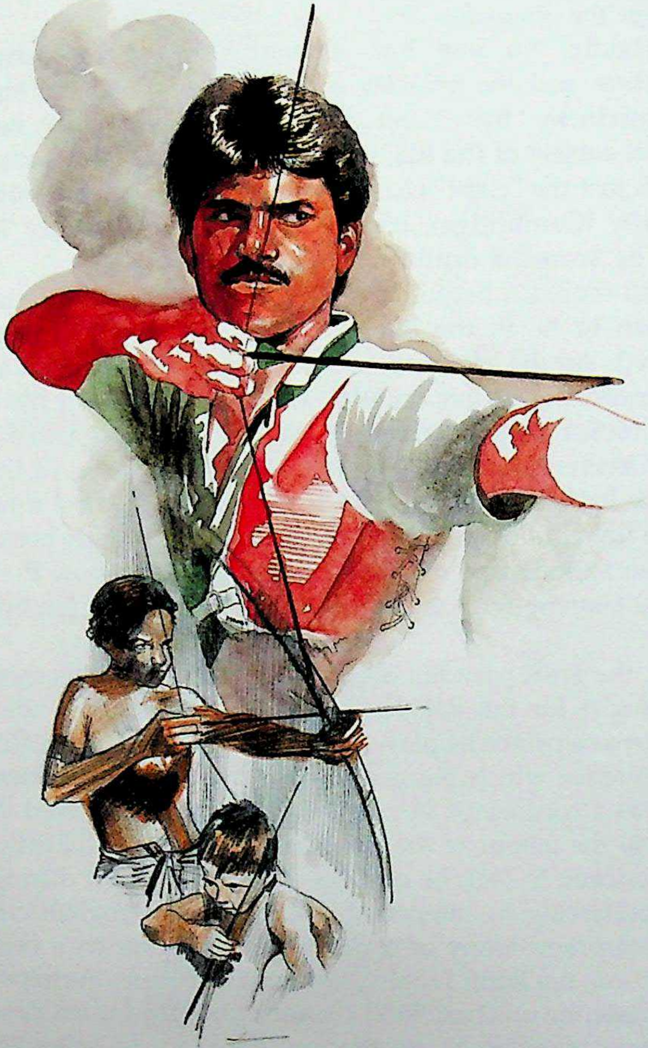
Certainly, no one has illustrated the links between cricket, colonialism and the princely order in India, and the strains therein, more succinctly than Ranji. As prince of Nawanagar, he qualified as the ideal subject of the Raj, whose rise in an English game was routed through just the "right" channels — public school (Rajkumar College), university (Cambridge), county (Sussex), and country (England, for whom he scored a century on Test debut).

Ranji scored a bagful of runs in his career, but his true mystique was seen to lie in the deep cultural connotations which his game conveyed. As the eminent cricket writer, Sir Neville Cardus, put it, "Ranji expressed in his cricket, not only himself but his race. He put Indian cricket on the map; more important, he presented to the world of the Occident the identity and unique civilization of the Orient . . . when he batted a strange light was seen for the first time on English fields, a light out of the East." Ranji, thus, unwittingly became a symbol of Indian nationalism, in that he was the first to show that the English could be beaten, if not in the political arena, then at least on the cricket field.

Yet, the great paradox is that Ranji throughout his career remained an apologist for the Raj. His cricket may have been unorthodox in style, but as a prince he played with a straight bat. The values of loyalty and deference which the game of cricket had taught him meant that Ranji was a conformist in colonial India, who preferred the luxury of the Raj to the labour of the freedom struggle. He did little to promote Indian cricket; in fact, he remained positively aloof during its nascent years, preferring to categorize himself as an "English cricketer".

The supreme irony of course is that the country's premier cricket competition, the Ranji Trophy, is named after him. Perhaps that is only appropriate, for much of Ranji's contribution to Indian sport remained emblematic, even as he experienced the pain of being an immigrant in his own country.

SPECIAL AREAS GAMES PROGRAMME



Limba Ram : From bamboo bow and arrow to international fame in archery.

Of all the schemes started by the Sports Authority of India, the one that would seem the most innovative and visionary is the Special Areas Games Programme (SAGP). Started in 1986, the SAGP has attempted to take advantage of certain locational and racial factors which are seen to encourage sporting talent. Thus, in the backwaters of Kerala, where water sports is a way of life, rowing, canoeing and kayaking specialists are being trained. In the Adivasi areas of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa, where tough, young tribals have played a cruder version of hockey called Khasi, potential hockey champions are being spotted. Fencing and judo are being taught to the tribals of the north-east, while Tellicherry district in Kerala, which has been the home of circus trapeze artists, is seen as a gymnastics territory. In Rajasthan, villagers who use a bamboo bow for hunting are being encouraged to become archers, while the Siddis — the only black African ethnic group in the country living in parts of Gujarat and Karnataka — are being seen as possible long-distance champions, especially as they genetically resemble the Kalenjin and Kisji tribes who have accounted for many of Kenya's Olympic medals.

The novelty in the project lies in its effort to provide sporting facilities to vast sections of the Indian populace, especially in rural India, who have been deprived of such opportunities. It is also interesting to find that a serious attempt is being made to entwine science with sport. Not only are the talent scouts looking closely at certain natural physiological advantages possessed by specific communities, but the trainees are being put through rigid screening tests to assess pulse rate, speed range and oxygen intake. They are also provided with schooling, food and clothing. This attempt at systematic and scientific training has been practically unheard of in a country where sportsmen have been expected to rely on natural talent alone.

The most dramatic results have been achieved in the field of archery. Thirteen months after Limba Ram, once a Rs 8-a-day farm worker from Udaipur district in Rajasthan, was spotted and made to discard his bamboo bow, the lad was a national champion. Two years later, he had won the Asian championships while breaking the previous record. Indian archers today are among the best in Asia, and it would be no surprise if they were to win an Olympic medal in the near future.

What the success of these archers shows is that Indian sport has the talent at the grassroot level to become more internationally competitive. At the same time, these talented sportsmen cannot be expected to funtion in a vacuum, but in a responsive sporting environment.

TEN OF THE GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS IN INDIAN SPORT

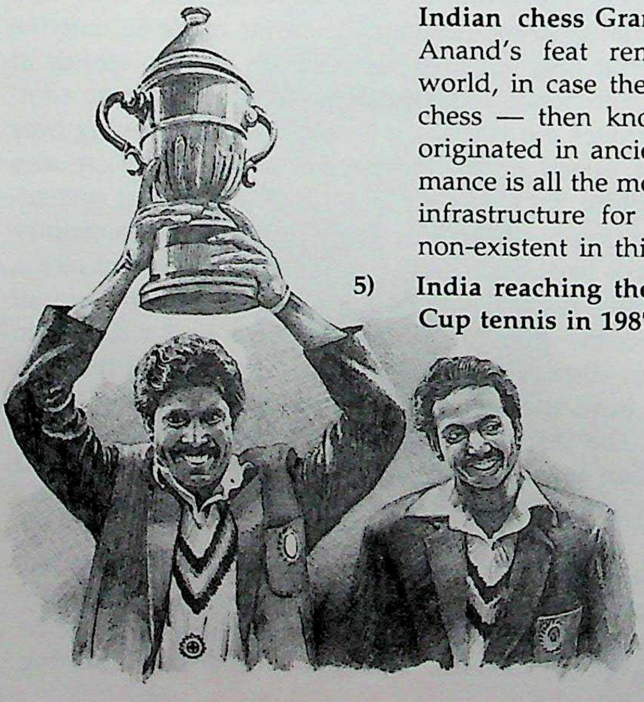
1) **India Winning in 1983, the Prudential World Cup in cricket** — By defeating England and West Indies to lift this coveted trophy at Lords, India, under the leadership of the star all-rounder Kapil Dev, enjoyed the distinction of being crowned the one-day cricket champions of the world. It also enabled the sport to acquire a level of mass popularity that remains undiminished to this day.

2) **Sunil Gavaskar's two world records** — In what has been often described as a "batsman's game" for Sunil Gavaskar to have scored more runs (10,122) and centuries (34) than any other batsmen in the history of Test cricket is a truly remarkable feat. It must rank as the finest individual achievement by an Indian.

3) **India defeating England in England in 1971 in cricket** — This was the first-ever Indian triumph in a Test series against England on English soil. It showed that the erstwhile "natives" had finally mastered their masters on their own turf.

4) **Viswanathan Anand becoming the first Indian chess Grand-Master** in 1990 — Anand's feat reminded the sporting world, in case they had forgotten, that chess — then known as *chaturanga* — originated in ancient India. His performance is all the more creditable because infrastructure for chess is practically non-existent in this country today.

5) **India reaching the finals of the Davis Cup tennis in 1987** — In what is one of



Kapil Dev with the Prudential World Cup, 1983, and Mohinder Amarnath, vice-captain.

the most competitive and international of modern sports, for India, to emerge as second-best in the world, beating such tennis giants as Australia along the way, is unarguably one of the finest team efforts.

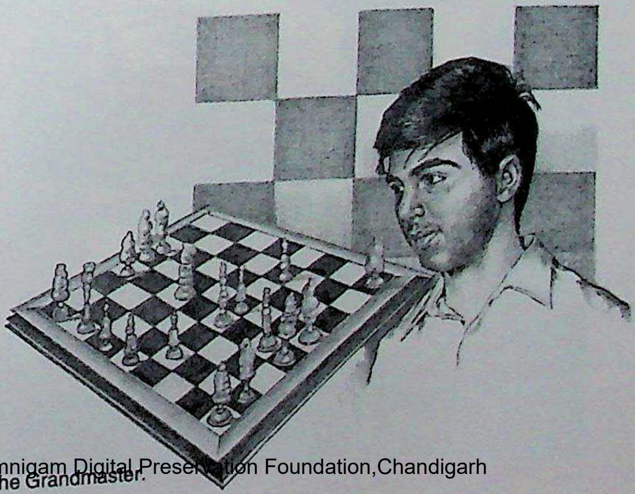
6) **India winning Six Consecutive Olympic hockey gold medals between 1928 and 1956** — For nearly three decades, the Indian hockey team dazzled the world with their artistry. In no other sport, at no other stage, was such dominance exercized by an Indian team.

7) **P.T. Usha finishing fourth in the 400 metres hurdles event in the 1984 Los Angles Olympics** — Usha's performance in missing out on a bronze medal by one-hundredth of a second remains the finest-ever by an Indian athlete. Its true import lies in the fact that it marks a landmark in women's sport in this country.

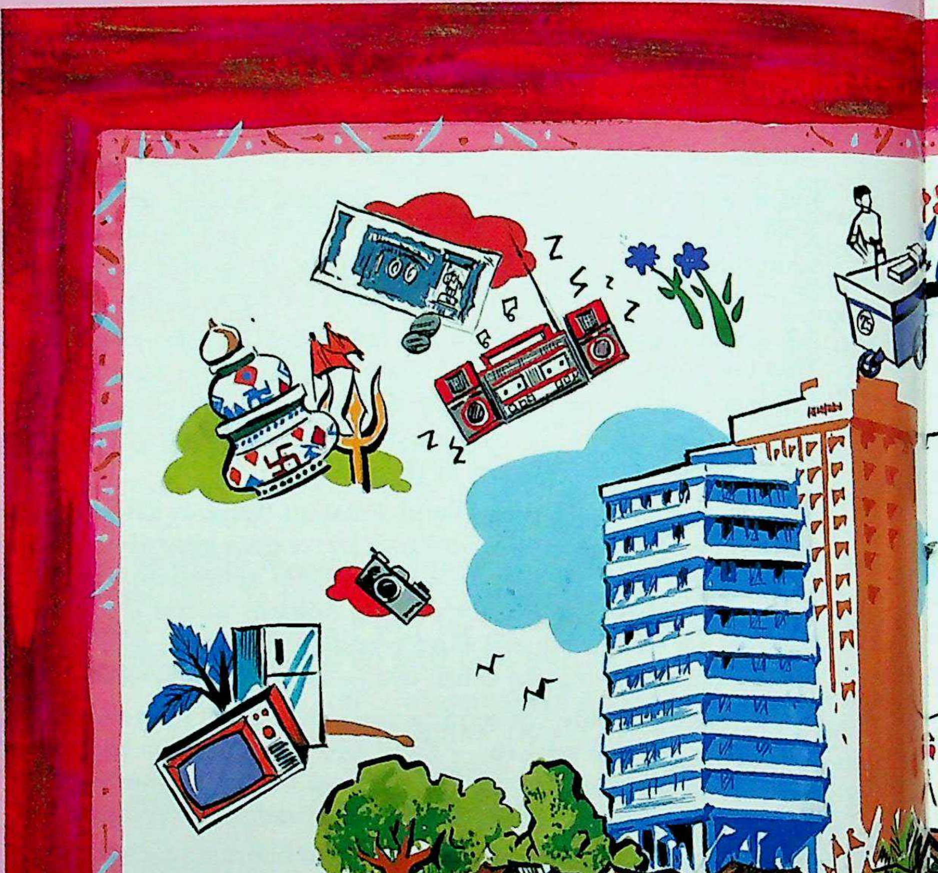
8) **Michael Ferreira becoming World Amateur Billiards Champion on three separate occasions** — Ferreira's feat entitles him to be regarded as the finest billiards player of the modern generation. Given the limited facilities available for playing billiards in this country, the fact that we have produced three world champions — Wilson Jones and Geet Sethi being the other two — is quite remarkable.

9) **Kapil Dev's "double" of scoring more than 3,000 runs and taking more than 300 test wickets** — Kapil Dev's record ranks him among the greatest all-rounders of all time. For an Indian fast bowler to take 300 wickets is testimony to his class and determination.

10) **Prakash Padukone becoming All-England badminton champion** — In an intensely competitive sport, dominated by the south-east Asians, for an Indian to win the unofficial world championships was a heroic feat.



Viswanathan Anand, the Grandmaster.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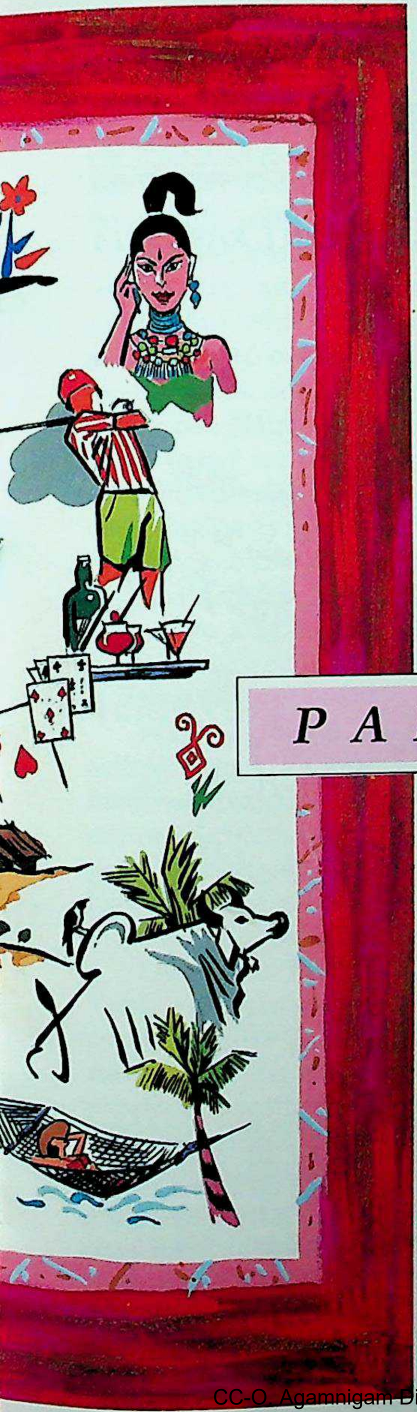


PART THREE

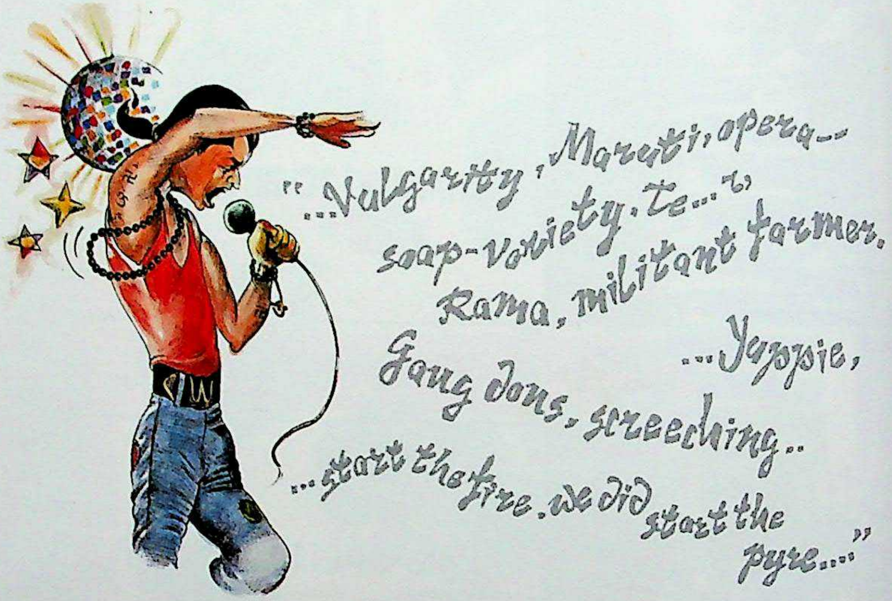
LEARNING TO BE EGO FRIENDLY

IN AID OF CLUBMANSHIP

NON-RESIDENT INDIANS

LEARNING TO BE EGO-FRIENDLY

BACHI J. KARKARIA


"...Vulgarity, Maruti, opera--
soap-variety. te...
Rama, militant farmer.
...Yuppie,
Gang dons, screeching..
...start the fire. we did start the
pyre...."

BACHI KARKARIA graduated from Calcutta University and later took a course in advanced journalism at the Thompson Foundation, Cardiff, UK. She began her journalistic career at The Illustrated Weekly of India. In 1980, she became the first woman assistant editor of The Statesman, at Calcutta. In 1988, she returned to Bombay as senior editor of The Times of India. Her specialisations are urban issues and public health, largely AIDS. She is also known as a humour writer, with a popular satirical column on social mores. She is the author of Dare to Dream, a biography of M.S. Oberoi, and To a Grand Design, on the life and times of Calcutta's Grand Hotel. She has co-authored a book on Mother Teresa.

REKHA, the reigning deity of Hindi films, isn't too worried over whether she appears for private screenings dressed as the legendary Annie Oakley or the mythological Shakuntala, as long as they've reserved a seat right next to her for her poodle, Pisti. The star and the bitch are known to be equally testy.

Husain, the bearded, barefoot patriarchal messiah of the art world, had an impressario-arranged· 75th birthday bash in which the cream of Bombay society slummed it out in a decrepit studio rigged out to be a cross between seedy backlane and the pearly gates, complete with street hoods and swaying *houris.*

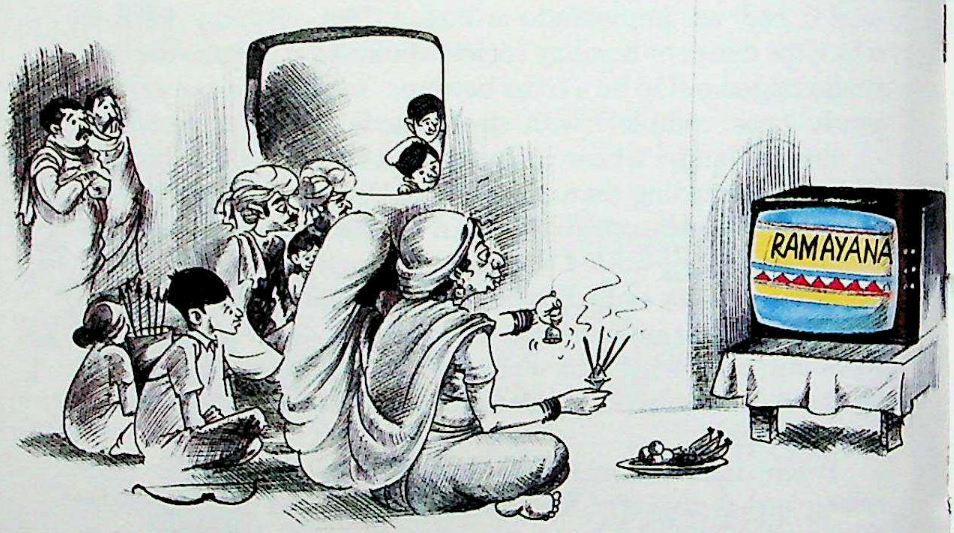
Pritish Nandy, whose romantic antics and Brynner baldness make better reading than anything in the papers he edits, was given a real microscope fixed at real spermaozoa at a lavish job-changing party he hosted. The giver swore it was Nandy's own.

When India's only English-language girlie magazine celebrated its 10th anniversary, it converted a five-star banquet room into a Monte Carlo wannabe, and had a leggy nymphet burst out of a confection; some said it was a cake, others insisted it was a tart.

When diamond merchants marry, they commission best-selling artists to paint the invitations, fly out planeloads of business associates from Antwerp and Arab lands, take over entire sports stadia for the ceremony, set them up with pavilions decorated almost as expensively as the bride, and air-drop the groom from a helicopter. The hymns consecrating the marriage are belted out from hi-tech speakers at melt-down decibel point.

Lifestyle in India has become a *raga*-rock of Vedic chants in Yankee drawls, an oxymoronic contradiction as incongruous as coconut water in a tetrapack. For this, one has to thank the message of the medium. The hand of the great anarch that shapes our world comes 16 inches across. It is the idiot box that now determines whether we eat two-minute noodles, spend big bucks on Reeboks or, for that matter, go back to the future with the revival of atavistic religious jingoism.

In the mid-1980s, blockbuster film maker Ramanand Sagar reconstituted the Hindu religious epic, the *Ramayana*, as a teleserial and changed Sunday mornings forever. The production became a phenomenal icon as families, bathed and beflowered, prostrated themselves in ritualistic obeisance before the small screen just as the opening bars of its theme music filled opulent mansion and one-room shanty alike. The incense may have appeared to have been for the celluloid Lord Rama, but any sociologist will tell you that the serial was only a usurping *avatar*. The actual deity was — is and will be for decades to come — the television set.



Grant honour where it's due. It was the incredible viewer-rating success of this *Ramayana* that laid the ground for the new trendified Hindu-centric lifestyle and the emerging popularity of the religious chauvinism of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Arguably, without this teleserial, there would have been no frenzied crowds following the Toyota rigged out as a chariot atop which sat the party leader, Mr L.K. Advani, taking the message of Hindu nationalism across the country. For that matter, there would have been none of the tennis bracelets with the primordial Hindu symbol, 'Om', that now dangle stylishly on delicate yuppie wrists. Mythology's Rama could return triumphant into the Indian psyche only because he first showcased himself as the whizkid of studio special effects. Because he'd already passed the prime-time test.

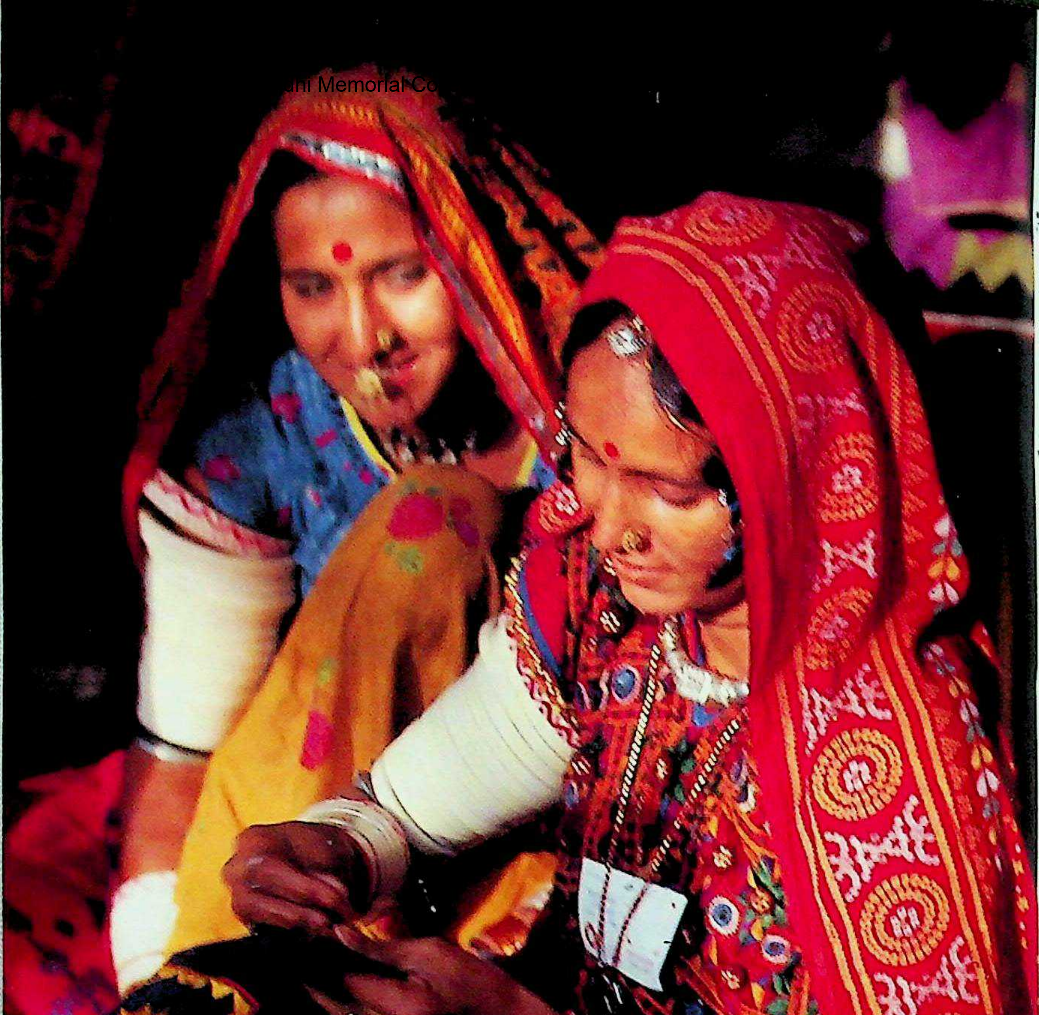
Indeed, if life has gone into turbo mode; if the last 10 years have careened recklessly to make up for the stodgy plodding of the earlier 30; if renunciation now simply means abjuring the 29th temptation in an ice cream of 34 flavours; if life now comes in a polypack instead of a banana leaf — one need not look towards liberalization, delicensing of industry and IMF loans, the new triumvirate that the huzzaing economists say will rewrite our destiny. One must look instead at the boob-tube. It is an updated Brahma as the creator of images, an upfront Shiva as the destroyer of backwardness, tea, even an upbeat Vishnu as the preserver of family life. Since 'Doordarshan', as the Indian network is called, prodded the great leap forward into consumerism, it is only fitting that it should be headquartered in a building named Mandi (market-place) House.

Before, television was the void; after it there can only be a more all-seeing eye. At first, all that Indians got from Hongkong were folding umbrellas; now it uncovers for them the whole world. The Indian middle-class forgets about poverty, population and pollution as, wide-eyed and zonked, it hitches its wagon to STAR-TV.

What would the old-world Brown Sahibs have said about this cultural metamorphosis? Probably, 'Thank God it was after sinking into the anachronistic oblivion of a disemboweled club armchair. Their once jealously guarded supremacy now lies in a shambles as *hoi polloi* jump on to the bandwagon of social mobility, without waiting to be invited, and with never a fear of being blackballed. Yet, for a long time, the 'boxwallah-Brahmin' of the British mercantile houses, and the 'heaven-born' of the Indian Civil Service had perserved their suzerainty by refusing to lay the ghosts of the Raj. Without these, they would have been at the mercy of the specters of quality.

And what would the old crusaders in homespun khadi have said, those who were freedom's midwives, and were as determined as the Raj relics on setting the societal agenda of emergent India? Theirs is a schizophrenic dilemma as they set about separating the polar legacies of two sets of Gandhis and the altered states of high thinking and low living.

But it wasn't as if these archetypal opposites crumbled only under the onslaught of their common enemy, consumerism. True, both spurned it. The Brown Sahib was convinced that



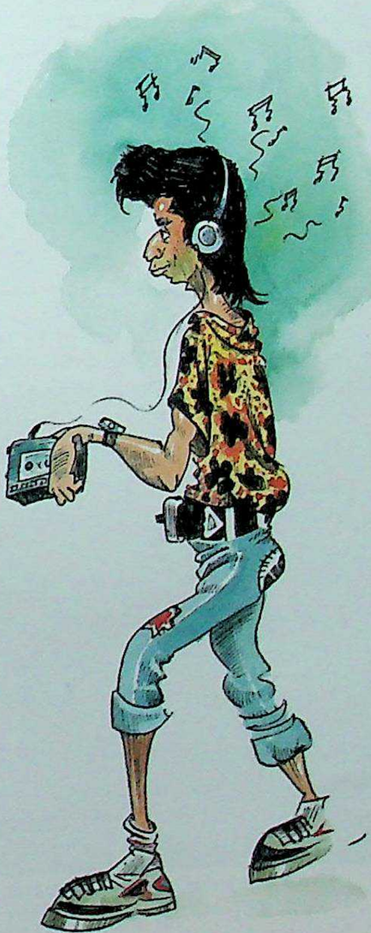
Craftswomen from Rajasthan.

*every*body getting access to privilege would spell sociological Armageddon; the khadi crusader was equally certain that *any*body getting such access would spell ditto. But both types had undergone a dramatic transmutation much before Indian lifestyle submitted, unprotestingly, to the diktat of the eight-second sound-byte.

The first defiance of the *status quo* came from the very first post-Independence generation. The black knight's heirs mothballed his worsted three-piece suit, and elevated its ethnic equivalent: guru shirt, tight pajamas and native waistcoat. The sons of the khadists remodelled the old socialistic wardrobe into safari suits. In a 60-40 terry-cotton mixture. The same blend was preferred for their monetary deals: 60 per cent by cheque, 40 per cent in tax-evasive cash.

In this second generation, one rediscovered the Indian heritage, the other was as hell-bent on abandoning it. One had 'ethnic-bashes', complete with the bearded *kabab* maker from the Muslim quarter transplanted on party lawns; the other wanted only Made In Japan. One immersed himself in the plaintive, period Hindi film-songs crooned by the younger Mohammed Rafi and the older Madhubala; the other preferred to pursue the line of action proclaimed by home-grown cinematic clones of Sylvester Stallone.

However, somewhere along the way, these clearly delineated types collided, suffered a massive identity crisis and were administered a course of electro-convulsive therapy. The men in the white homespun overalls,



who had for decades politically doctored the nation, now no longer wore crumpled *dhotis*. Along with Rajiv Gandhi, the yuppie prime minister, came an entourage that wore Levi's, read Archie, favoured Gucci, and didn't think Stan Getz was the neighbourhood tough. The consumerist dream, till now the ultimate repression, became a reality. In technicolour.

Nothing symbolized the new liberalization as completely as the metallic-hued Maruti car, made in collaboration with Japan's Suzuki. Not only did it edge out the indigenous and once ubiquitous Ambassador, which had invariably come in hearse black, it gave birth to a social class that was perpetually on the fast track. They rashly, brashly zoomed past everyone else on city streets, cassette decks blaring, and screeched to a halt outside plate-glassed shopping malls. In tele-soap-opera, *Hum Log*, the socialistic serial portraying common people gave way to *'Khandan'*, a blatantly elitist Indian 'Dynasty'. It was no longer a crime against the state to want the good life.

Untramelled, from gray austerity set free, the noisy persuaders began their high-voltage pressure points. And the shell-shocked middle-class emerged with a new identikit. Each family was a xerox of the other. Cultural distinctions disappeared. Everyone was merely at varying rungs of the same social ladder, everyone aspired, with minor regional variations, to the same goal: expensive, ersatz, ergonomical, ego-friendly.

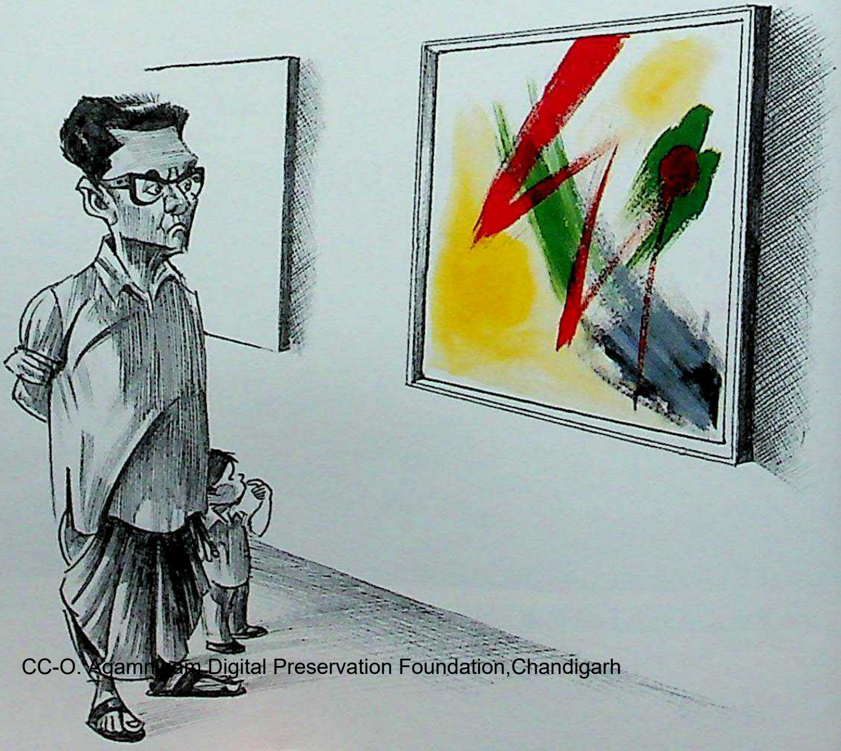
The earlier New Rich Indian was once an object of derision. Now, in another expansion of his initials, he changed into the Non-Resident Indian, and became the new, improved, updated version of the Holy Grail since he could buoy up the economy with his fistsful of dollars. Or dirhams for that matter. The earlier, primitive, money-order economy acquired a folderful of international credit cards. Indeed, together with plastic orchids from Singapore, Indians discovered plastic money with which to make the vertical climb. As if in a giant hamburger stall, the Big M of Mobility began to dominate our lives. 'Them' suddenly realized it could be like 'Us'. The uncrossable found a bridge. Upper-crust walls were breached by the middle-class, the demonstrative effect trickled to small towns now able to hit the big time thanks to remittances sent by Indian migrant workers who'd found an El Dorado in the Gulf sheikhdoms. The shampoo-in-sachet appearing at the village grocer's was the call

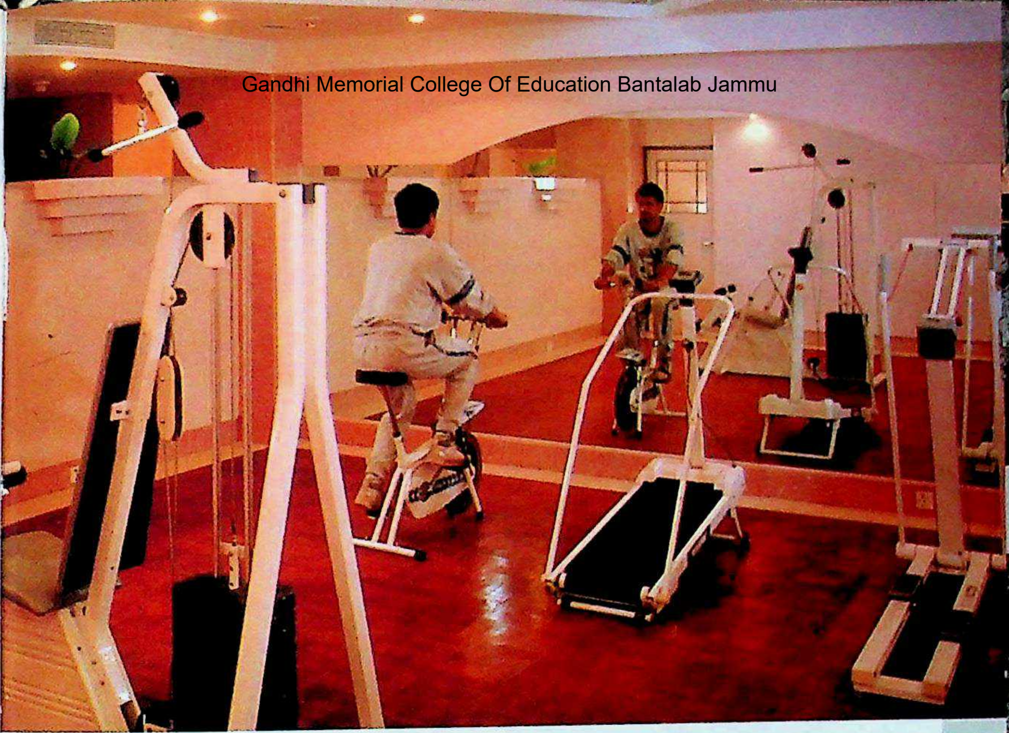
Sarod Maestro, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, in his living room.

heralding that one more traditionalist had gone cuckoo over consumerism.

The clearest indicator of change was the religious festival — Durga Puja, Ganeshotsav, Diwali, Navaratri. Religiosity and festivity were subsumed by philistinism. Even in ultra-conservative Calcutta, a Saraswati idol was fashioned wearing jeans and a skimpy, knotted blouse instead of a sedate sari, and blasphemously strumming a guitar instead of her traditional instrument, the limpid-noted veena. In the consumerist Mount Olympus, the commo-deity usurped the place at the head of the pantheon.

Matrimonial advertisements, ever the mirror of society on the make, reflected the new acquisitionist philosophy. On the eligibility rating, engineer/doctor/government officer was soon suaved out by MBA/systems analyst/ green-card holder. Yuppie lifestyles were financed by Smart Money from automatic teller machines. No one wanted fixed deposits in the bank; everyone betted on rampaging stockmarket bulls. And the textile advertising line, 'Only Vimal', propagated by Mr Dhirubhai Ambani, the greatest self-made tycoon of them all, became the shibboleth of the new, me-first mono-culture.





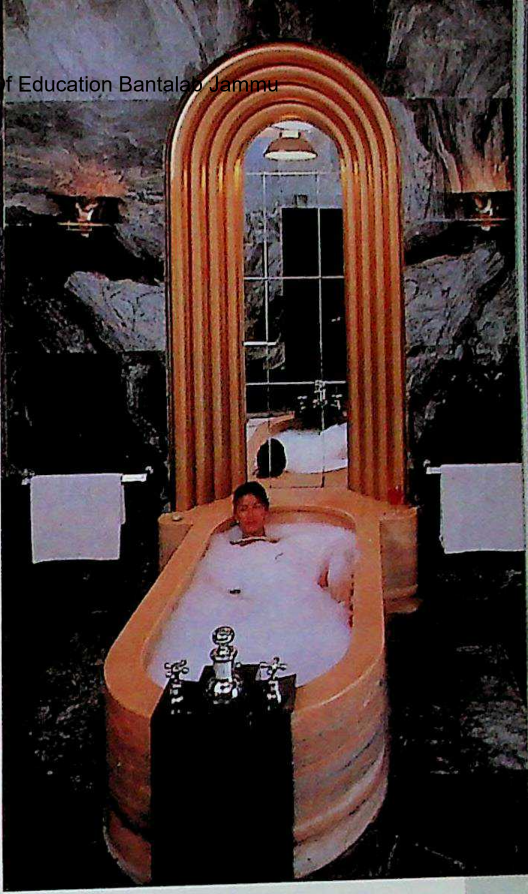
Above : Health Club: let's get physical.
Below: By the poolside.

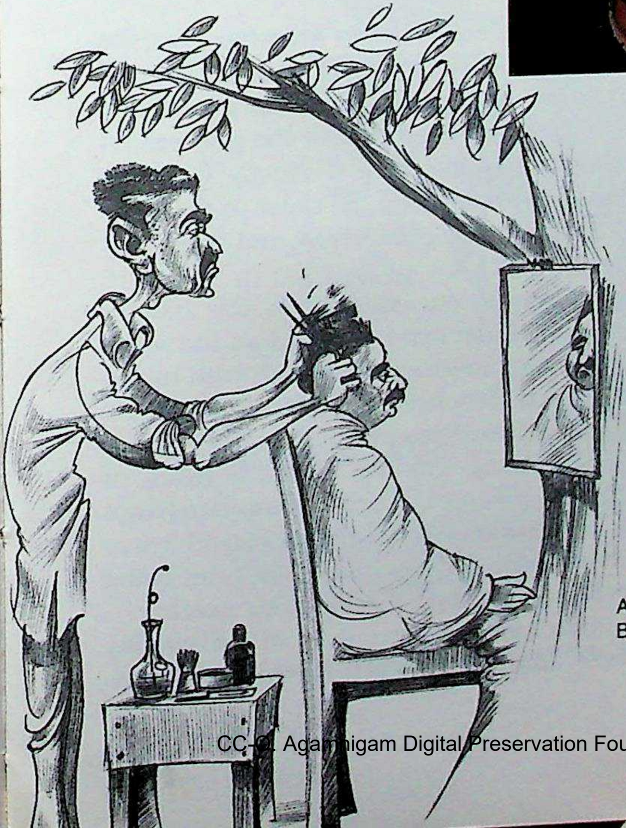
Art attracted the craftiest operators. Diamond merchants, when they weren't being kidnaped, were snapping up Husain canvases at prices as bare-faced as his feet. Everybody who was anybody got an attack of Anjolie Ela Menon-gitis, forking out phenomenal sums for the hollow-eyed figures of this fish-eyed artist. Sotheby's and Christie's began wielding the auctioneer's hammer for children with sickle-cell anaemia and other worthy causes. No one any longer seemed capable of quiet charity, and, if, at such loud and lavish fund-raising 'Nites', the right hand didn't know what the left one was doing, it was only on account of the uncoordinated movements demanded by latter-day Western dance uninhibitedly freaked out to be dressed in ethnic chic.

The old Nehruvian socialistic concern gave way to a purely social one, with the new credo being 'to each according to his greed'. Even do-gooders began chasing the designer label, whether it was on the causes they supported or the rawhide-satchel they sported. It is worth noting that India jettisoned socialism well before events in the old USSR proclaimed the end of history. Indeed, austerity got out as soon as potato chips in five flavours got their letters of intent. Revolution was reduced to the turntable of the microwave; the only agitator was that of the washing machine.

Even if the prime ministers who succeeded Rajiv Gandhi could hardly be described as yuppy, market forces were too entrenched to give up their positions or their brand positioning. Yes, everything got 'branded', from newspapers to politicians, each packaging itself for its predetermined, presliced, predigested market segment. Godmen had been at it much earlier, promoting *nirvana* as glibly as dustbin-liners.

Food, of course, was a marker of mobility like no other. While in the past, inverted snobbery ordained that the higher you climbed, the more downmarket became your chosen chow; now the spiral-bound manual dictated that you synchronize taste-buds to Manhattan instead of the malodorous tangle of the city's gut. For the new brand of trendies, the discovery of India no longer necessitated the discovery of E. Coli as well. Back from courses in Slavic animation techniques, Scandinavian graphics, Silicon Valley software and Smithsonian seminars on





Above : 'Designer' bathroom
Below : Roadside barber.

fertility symbols — or merely back from a Travel Corporation of India's 'nine-nights Far East group tour' — the Indian learnt the virtues of aniseed-flavoured cheese and surrendered herself hedonistically to days of white wine and *rosé*.

Health faddists made genuine foodies quite sick. Let a thousand *moong* beans sprout, proclaimed Ms Brown as she made a ritual of spreading unsalted low-fat butter on seven-grain bread with a side-order of yeast extract washed down with soya milk and just a dash of decaf coffee. The afforested urban jungles came alive with the sound of cracking sunflower seeds. The health package arrived with all its listed accessories, and the great Indian efflorescence made all other greens seethe with envy as they watched wizards of ozone recycle the effluent society into paper tigers.

However cities and even small towns bloomed with more 'hasty-tasty snacketerias' than 'health-food shoppes'. A nation caught in the collision of east and west created such blight-resistant, high-yielding hybrids as chicken 'n' mushroom *dosas*, sandwich-*dhoklas*, cocktail *kababs*, *tandoori* pizzas and Fetuccini Masala.

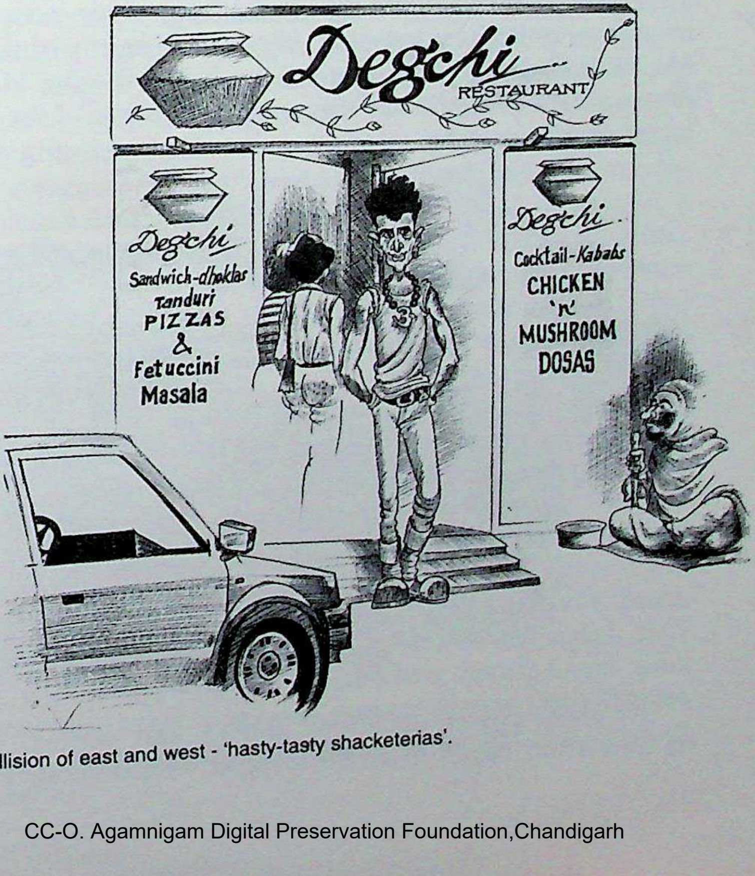
The totem of the growing cult of zero worship was the 'designer' bathroom. The wash-basin acquired a quality beyond the wildest dream-sequences of Bombay filmdom. The poster of the bearded Viennese analyst pegged above the pot was, in fact, an extant icon: there was something distinctly Freudian about the money that literally went down the cause of the drain — sanitized, deodorized, texturized, glamorized, and surely not a little surprised.

This was the real altar of our vanities as the cistern-commode combo ('matching bidet extra') arrived on the social register. Perhaps that's what's known as being flush with funds. Bathrooms splintered into schizophrenia, suffering from the grand delusion of being a super-deluxe hotel lobby. Certainly they had as much of gleaming granite, as many miles of counters, and as impressive an array of original art. Perchance even running water. If one learnt to decode the shorthand it was easy to grace the journey their owners had made from being plastics *parvenu* to being elevated to the Plexiglas peerage.

The noble savage didn't get a chance even in the swanky weekend retreats he now acquired — beach shack, farm house, country club complete with 'boating'. (No boaters and Pimm's. Alas.) No one really wanted to get away from it all. And the cordless telephone made it easier. Incidentally, using it in the loo became the latest statement of style.

Tradition was demolished as completely in the paradigm-shift from ancestor-worship to cane-worship, and the young arrived earlier and earlier on the scene, demanding to be heard. In the consummation of Mammon and commo-deity, sprawling department stores sprang up with designer lines for kids, and discotheques raised their decibels as they lowered their age-limits, now touching base — and falsetto — at 13. Teenage mutants turned turtle in their very own Maruti cars.

It couldn't have been otherwise. The nuclear family had neither nanny nor *nani*, the maternal grandmother, and children, instead of being tucked in with bedtime story, perforce had to be taken along when parents chose to dine out. Then, television, the great puppeteer in the sky, transmitted exception

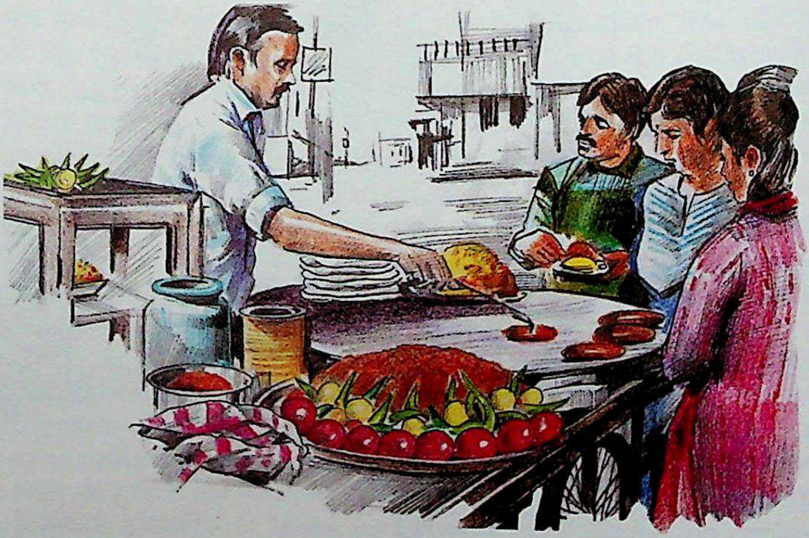

Degchi
RESTAURANT
Degchi
Sandwich-dhoklas
Tanduri
PIZZAS
&
Fetuccini
Masala
Degchi
Cocktail-Kababs
CHICKEN
'n'
MUSHROOM
DOSAS

The collision of east and west - 'hasty-tasty shacketerias'.

into rule. Papa and Mummy allowed 'Bounty' and 'Pinky' to sit zapped — and silent — by the audio-visual excesses, so that they could watch the Sunday tear-jerker on the box in peace.

One could hardly blame Doordarshan for not beaming speciality programmes at more civilised hours for children, thus taking care of their yearning for televiewing. Children couldn't watch anything before 8 p.m.; children were struggling with all the homework that schools — and even kindergarten — loaded on them. "They also need some relaxation, no?" said Mummy, as everyone freshened up for the ritual, genuflected towards the new family deity, and then collapsed in a mesmeric trance before it.

Mummy had reason to lavish the box with motive offerings, for, hadn't it finally granted the boon denied to Indian women for five millennia. Suffragettes? No sirree. It was the Sunday film that freed them from the tyranny of the kitchen stove. By the time the movie was over, it was too late to start cooking up the curries. So, for Sunday dinner, every one trooped out for a plate of *bhelpuri*, *pav-bhaji*, *masala dosa*, or any of the local fast foods that had been around long before the Big Mac was even a gleam on a griddle. This was the thin end of the wedge for what soon became an open-door policy on eating out.



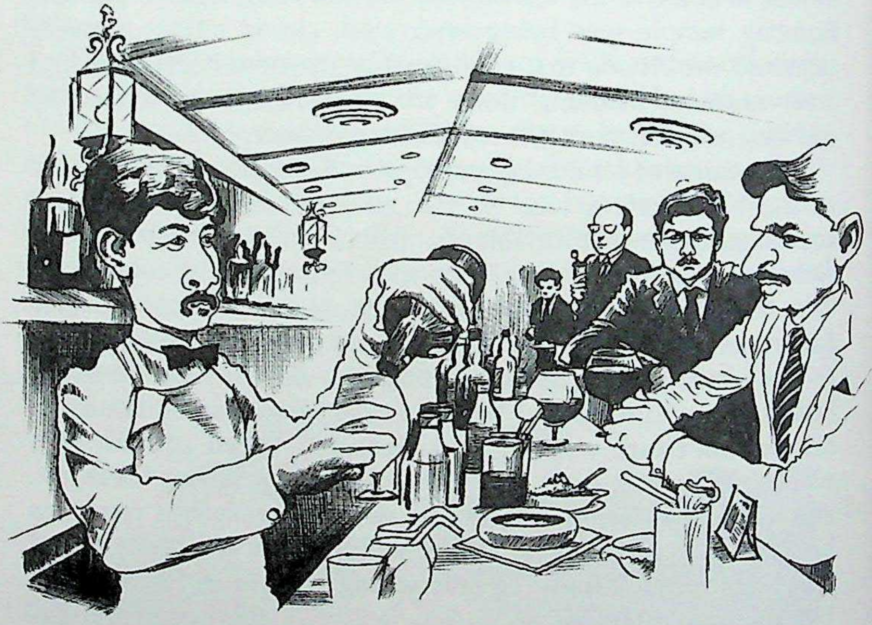
As new power equations shifted and settled, even traditionalism began to arrive stopped with decorative laminate, neon-lit and commercially sponsored. If it hadn't blended smooth with the new lord of the pantheon, it wouldn't have stood a chance. So, as though in a three-speed sociological food processor, Hindu nationalism coalesced with consumerism to fill the gaps in group identity that remained despite the instant freemasonry of the heat'n'eat ethos. Now, however, the Hindu didn't demand merely omnipotence from his gods; they had to be viewer-friendly as well. Naturally those who had played lead roles in the tele-epic were found simply divine by the electorate, and political leaders fell at their feet begging all these celluloid deities to come to the aid of their parties. And, when a popular Bombay temple was being renovated, closed circuit cameras televised the rituals that continued in the now-burlap-covered *inner sanctum*, beaming them on giant screens to which the queuing worshippers offered their obeisance.

The cause of all this lay perhaps in the double-bind. Racked as the New Indian was by the guilt of his Western/alien commercialism, yet unable to tear himself away from its seduction, he turned to religion as a figleaf for his conscience. But, this time round, it wasn't regression into fuddy-duddy fundamentalism. Instead it is trendy car stickers that exhort you to 'Say with Pride that you are Hindu'. Morevover, the latest brand of vacuum-packed Vedanta calls for no ascetic renunciation, doesn't care whether you sleep on a bed of nails or a water-bed, won't insist on heavy-philosophy before breakfast, and raises no serious objections should a religious celebrant boogie to a lambada beat. So, the yuppie quite effortlesly found his come-uppance in the equally young Scuppie — Saffron Clad Urban Professional.

The cultural revolution and its gang of four — mobility, market forces, money power, and matching bidets —hasn't been an overnight rumbling in of the tanks and tumbrels. It's been a gradual process, a slow bonfire of earlier niceties. The path to Consumerism Now is scattered with our own local societal litter. Billy Joel would have to sing his chartbuster differently in India: "Vulgarity, Maruti, opera — soap variety. Tequila, Rama, militant farmer. Foreign-exchange racket, Nehru jacket, five-figure pay packet. Gang dons, screeching horns, Kama Sutra condoms. Tear-jerker, pub-beer, musical reverse gear. Yuppie, Scuppie, home-video diety. We did start the fire. We did start the pyre."

IN AID OF CLUBMANSHIP

JUG SURAIYA



JUG SURAIYA is a senior editor with The Times of India, Delhi. He is a contributor to the Far Eastern Economic Review; The Guardian, London; Business Traveller, Hong Kong; and the New York Review of Books. His published works include The Interview and other short stories (Writers Workshop, 1971); Homecoming a novel (Arnold Heinemann, 1977), 'Delhi Belly, an anthology of satire-(Rupa, 1991); A Chap Called Peter Pan, Short Stories (Penguin, 1992); and Rickshaw Ragtime, an impressionistic profile of Calcutta (Penguin, 1993); A Taste for the Jugular, an anthology of satire (Rupa 1993).

The story goes that when Satyajit Ray was put up for membership of the *Calcutta Club* a subtle point of order arose. Since the famous cineaste needs no introduction to anyone, how could he be introduced to the club committee, a formality obligatory by the rules of the institution? It is said that the dilemma was resolved by inviting Mr Ray to join the club and then having the committee be introduced to *him*, instead of the other way about, thus saving face all round.

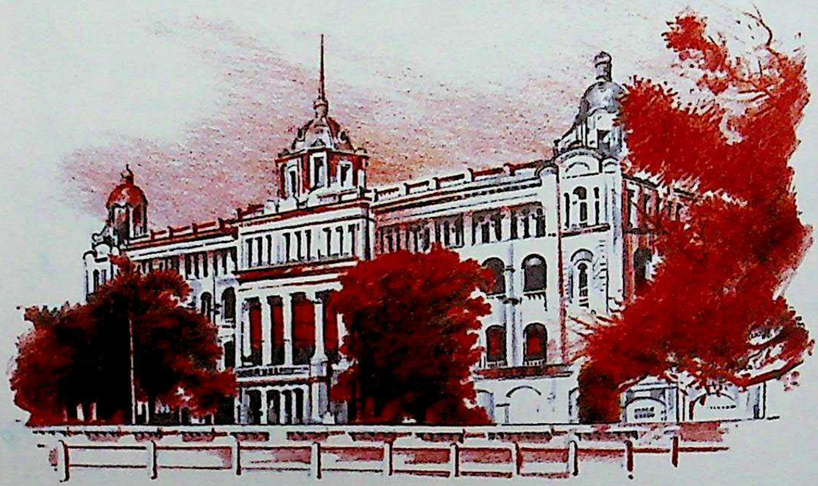
While doubtlessly untrue, the story does help to illustrate the consummate art of gamesmanship as practised in Calcutta's clubland, a twilight zone where East and West seem to have not only met but merged to ensure that the sun never sets on the sundowner and God is still, if not an Englishman, at least a brown sahib.

The colonial club, bastion of the Raj, was invented by the British in the belief that every imperial Englishman's surrogate home should be his castle where he could be himself among others of his own kind. Building an empire was a bothersome business, calling for British bluff, a stiff upper lip and other uncomfortable angularities designed to awe the native populace and keep it in its place. Much more than his counterpart at home, the Englishman abroad needed a place where he could seek sanctuary from the high noon of Empire, momentarily put aside his white-man's burden, let down his sola topi and a couple of gins and tonic, and generally unbend a bit.

Thus the club came into being in its colonial manifestation. The secret of clubdom was that it was a world within a world, with its own rules and codes of conduct, its own history and mythology and its own heroes and villains. A chap might be a wife-beating, felonious blackguard in private life. But so long as he was socially presentable, played a reasonable game of bridge or billiards, told a good yarn and, most importantly, wasn't "chit-shy" when it was his turn to order a round at the bar, he was a jolly good fellow and a pillar of the club community. Like that other time-honoured institution of consenting adults in public war-clubland had its own Geneva protocol.

Most of the colonial clubs of course excluded Indians from membership. There were, however, notable exceptions to this unwritten rule. Institutions like the Willingdon Club, Bombay, and the *Calcutta Club* were created specifically in order to facilitate social intercourse between British and those Indians who were, in the opinion of the former, what in today's argot are referred to as "PLUs"— people like us. That this co-option had the added advantage of helping to strengthen the foundations of the Raj was a point that need not have been lost on the proponents of such selective liberalism. That said, it is also a part of clubland lore that it was in the environs of the *Calcutta Club* that the horrifying details of the Bengal famine of 1942 were gleaned by the then editor of *The Statesman*, causing the newspaper to launch its courageous crusade against the man-made calamity and earn the displeasure of the colonial government.

If London was, as Dr Johnson might have described it, the most clubbable place in the world, Calcutta, the so-called "Second City of the Empire", was determined to try harder. Calcutta's *Bengal Club* may have been a somewhat less august *avatar* of its Olympian original, the Oriental Club in London. But in answer to London's exclusive 400 Club—so called because its membership was restricted to that number—Calcutta came up with the even more selective 300 Club which, housed in a



Old Bengal Club Building at Chowringhee Road.

turreted mansion, was the creation of a confederacy of Indian princes and a White Russian adventurer whose friendly pet python, slithering about the premises, is said to have caused many a late-night reveller to take an oath of abstinence or otherwise.

The real serpent in Eden, however, turned out to be the Second World War and the flood of G.I.R and other Servicemen it brought in its wake. *The 300* hospitably opened its doors to many of them only to be left with a heap of unpaid bar bills as evidence that its assets had literally been liquidated. Where silken gowns had once rustled, a *dhobi's* clothesline straddles the unkempt, deserted grounds, the flapping laundry, a rag-tag flag flying at half-mast for departed glory.

The cessation of hostilities and the subsequent ebb of Empire left other casualties in their wake.Among these was the *United Services Club* which overnight found itself transformed into the Indian Geological Society. A vigorous but vain rearguard action was fought by institutions like the *Calcutta Swimming Club* and the *Saturday Club* which till the early 1960s maintained their "whites only" policy, an issue that occasioned periodic outbursts of wrath in the "Letters to the Editor" columns of the local press but otherwise was blithely ignored by a city more concerned with the prices of fish and tram tickets, both of which sparked off public-spirited riots.

While the ceremonial burning of trams is unlikely to have inconvenienced the members of the *Saturday Club* or the *Swimming Club,* it may have had an effect on the attendance of the celebrated dances ("Dress: formal. No shorts allowed") of the "Anglo-Indians only" *Rangers Club* which carried on till dawn when public transport would be in operation, to carry the celebrants home. The other two social establishments reserved for Anglo-Indians were the *Grail Club* and the *Dalhousie Institute,* inevitably nicknamed "the Lousy Institute" by its members in good-humoured disparagement.

The *Calcutta Club* had its own die-hard rites of passage and till almost 10 years after freedom had been won, women were not free to enter the club's premises by the main door but had to come in by the tradesmen's entrance around the corner. Beneath this gruff exterior, however, lurked a benevolent, if quirky, paternalism as represented by the well-known barrister who would walk into the bar, quote a passage from Shakespeare, and offer to buy a drink to anyone who could name the play from which it was taken.

But despite the bulwark of Shakespeare and Scotch whisky, the winds of change were beginning to blow. As its weekly fry-ups, the *Calcutta Rowing Club* gave up wrapping the fish and chips in carefully preserved, month-old copies of *The Times*, London, and, despite members' complaints that the ink didn't taste quite the same, made do instead with *The Statesman* — though not yet the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*. At the Regatta Night Ball at the nearby *Lake Club*, a man attired in an immaculate dress suit stalked onto the crowded dance floor and executed a perfect yogic headstand, the upside-down posture an eloquent comment in body-language on traditions being turned topsy-turvy.

Under pressure, both economic and social, the *SaturdayClub* and the *Swimming Club* opened their doors to Indians. Waiting for no further invitation, the then Minister for Sports for West Bengal, Mr Ram Chatterjee, marched into the *Swimming Club* at the head of a straggling line of village youngsters who somewhat sheepishly followed their leader's example by jumping into the once-exclusive pool in a symbolic gesture that sent ripples spreading through the protected backwaters of clubdom.

At about the time Mr Chatterjee was taking the plunge, I was being prepared for my own baptism to club life. Having acquired a job and a fianceé in that order, I was deemed by my future father-in-law to be ready to become a fully paid-up member of the community and my candidature was put up for the *Saturday Club*.

As is the case in any tribal culture, initiation into clubhood was a long, involved and occasionally painful procedure requiring patience, fortitude, the counsel of elders and the procurement of sundry accoutrements of ceremonial regalia for the various arcane rituals that had to be undergone. The first of these was the "see seven" meeting with seven members of the club committee on the basis of which my sponsor and seconder would informally be intimated whether their candidate was acceptable or not. The main thing, I was told repeatedly, was to avoid getting oneself blackballed. The

Calcutta Club

blackball, apparently, was a very powerful ju-ju. People who got blackballed became non-persons and were cast beyond the pale reserved for officers, gentlemen and assorted *sahib-lok*. Not at all sure of my credentials for inclusion in this generic category, and convinced that my imposture would be unmasked, I went to "see seven", clad in my new charcoal gray lounge suit.

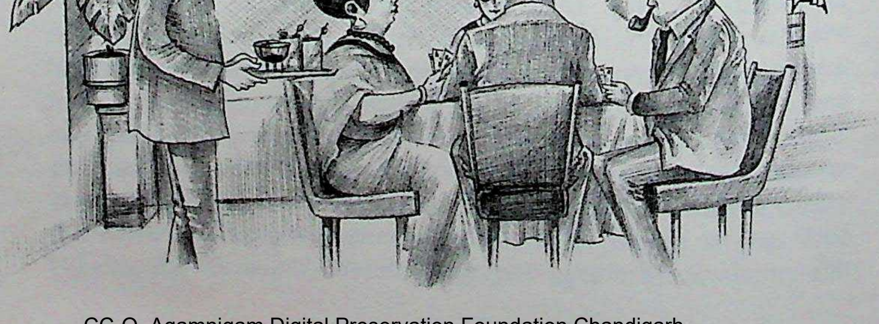
Somehow, "see seven" went off without a hitch, except for an awkward moment when I corrected a committee member's recipe for a Manhattan cocktail. After a moment's frosty silence, he inquired of my sponsor whether I was being put up for membership of the club or to fill the post of barman. Lesson No. 1: A gentleman is expected to know about cocktails — but not too much.

The formal introduction to the full committee was a black-tie affair. The shardskin jacket of my new dress suit that had cost a month's salary was so dazzling white it hurt my eyes to look in the mirror. The evening passed in a blur. All I can remember is listening, for what seemed like hours, to the president — who bore the same name as a famous Scottish poet—telling me all I ever wanted to know about the idiosyncrasies of the bathroom bumbling in his new house in Putney.

Two days later the ballot box was opened and I hadn't, after all, been blackballed. Welcome to the club.

My friend, philosopher and guide to the "Slap" as it was known (short for "slap and tickle", an evocative description of the high-jinks that occasionally took place there) was Brian St John Conway, a British expatriate and the oldest member of the club. We'd meet in the Light House Bar, bequeathed to the club by the regiment of that name which fought its last action in 1943 in Goa where it blew up a clandestine Nazi base. A display of war medals, sabres and spears created a suitably martial atmosphere. The spears had been bolted down after someone had used one of them for an improvised game of darts, the missile whistling through the beard of a bearer bringing a tray of drinks into the bar.

Brian himself had been quite a terror in his early days, once having set afire the plastic flowers misguidedly ordered for the bar by the wife of the then secretary. But now, as oldest member, Brian saw himself as the self-appointed guardian of club law as he perceived it, carrying on a one-man crusade against misdemeanours and more serious crimes, such as tipping the staff, a sin punishable by immediate expulsion.

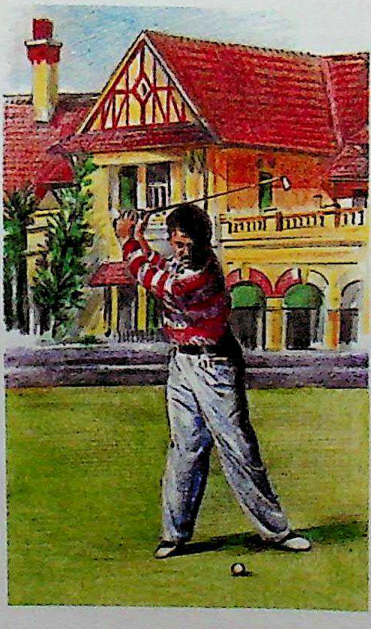


Keeper of the peace in the secretary's absence, Brian once had an obstreperous drunk ejected from the club premises. The head *khansamah* came back to report that the offending sahib had tried to climb back in over the gate, slipped and got the turn-up of his trouser leg snagged on the spike on top. "*Sahib abhi ulta latak raha hai*" (The sahib is dangling upside down), said the *khansamah,* waiting for further orders. With fearsome, magisterial finality, Brian thundered: "*Latakne do!*" (Let him dangle!).

Brian's oldest friend was Neil Ghosh, who swore that the novelist, Paul Scott, had used him as a model for the public school Indian, Hari Kumar, in the Raj Quartet. Neil had a short way with those he suspected of putting on airs. When a visiting ex-raja gave elaborate instructions on how his drink should be prepared (including chilling the glass, salting the rim, adding the ice, "not too little, not too much", etc.,), Neil asked the steward if he had got all that right. "Yes, sir," replied the steward. "Good," growled Neil, "now give the b... a gin and lime like everyone else."

But even in never-never clubland, time must roll on. Uppity rajas gave way to radical leftists whose ideological hue was reflected in an aptly red and volcanic cocktail called a "Naxalite", the invention of a "Slap" member. The population boom in the country was echoed by a corresponding explosion in club membership, which in some cases registered a 500 per cent increase. The *Dalhousie Institute* began to take non-Anglo-Indians and, allegedly after the diplomatic intervention of the then Governor of West Bengal, the "Slap" admitted the *dhoti.* On club buffet tables tandoori chicken and biryani took pride of place over cold cuts and Melton Mowbray pie. The hearty entertainment fare of rugger reviews at the *Calcutta Cricket* and *Football Club* was laced with the *mirch masala* of Hindi pop and the annual fireworks display at the "Slap" (which wasn't called that anymore) was shifted from Guy Fawke's night to Diwali. Tipping, once taboo, became common, even in that holy of holies, the *Bengal Club*, where bearers in pursuit of handouts were known to dog visitors all the way to the car park and even halfway down the street. The situation was succinctly summed up by a member of the *Saturday Club* who interrupted her litany of woes regarding falling standards to nibble a *pakora* and, fastidiously ignoring the paper napkin by her plate, wipe her fingers on the hem of the tablecloth.

In chance, however, there has been continuity. Old *koi hai's* at the *Bangalore United Services* (BUS) Club (which featured prominently in David Lean's *Passage to India*) still recall how, till recently, Winston Churchill was posted up as a defaulter on the club notice board for failure to pay the bar bills run up by him as a junior commissioned officer temporarily posted in Bangalore. In nearby "snooty Ooty," the Ootacumund Hunt is rumoured still to ride to hounds, though its unfortunate quarry is only a jackal, a poor county cousin of the fox. The Mirzapur Club in "Miserypur" still boasts of only 46 in-station members — not counting the occasional snake that slithers through the overgrown tangle of the garden.The stag bar at the *Calcutta Club* remains a resolutely male preserve; in deference to the venerable constitutions of the majority of the members the pegs are more *chhota* than those served in other institutions and Montu, the under-steward, is still a cornucopia of cricket information. The *Dalhousie Institute* still leads the field in quizzing, an increasingly popular pastime that it helped to put on the entertainment map of the country. The *CC* and *FC* continues to play host to cycle polo and elbow-bending at the bar, while in the dining room of the *Bengal Club* smoking is still not allowed till 2.30 p.m., on the stroke of which a selection of cigars and little charcoal braziers with which to ignite them magically appear.

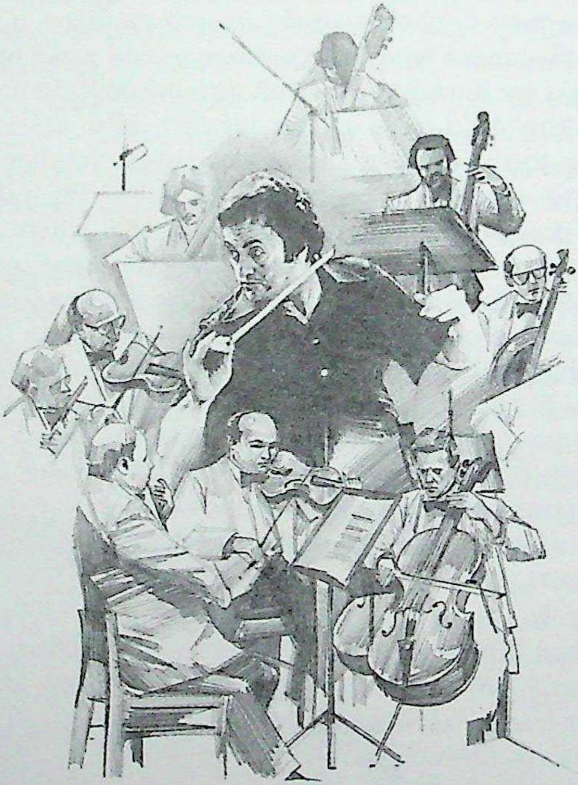


The Royal Calcutta Golf Club.

"Squire" Wright, Calcutta's answer to David Nivien, still exercises genial suzerainty over the *Tollygunge Club,* housed in a sylvan estate once owned by the descendants of Tipu Sultan. Across the road in the *Royal Calcutta Golf Club,* the second oldest golfing institution in the world after St Andrews in Scotland, the nineteenth hole of the Shamiana bar is full of "birdies", "bogies" and "bunkers" interspersed with the fervent prayer of thanksgiving of a player who narrowly missed getting a hole in one, an accomplishment which by tradition would make him liable to buy drinks for the house and run up a bill considerably in excess of the kitty he'd have got for his feat. With its card room resounding to the cries of *paploo* and *taploo,* the *Punjab Club* continues to enjoy the distinction of being the only establishment in the country, and perhaps the world, where an order of chicken chow mein is likely to be accompanied by a side helping of raw onions and *aam ka achaar.* The *Bowling Green* on the *maidan* remains one of the only two institutions in the country where that ancient English sport is still pursued, and that too with a skill and enthusiasm that would make that old master of the game Sir Francis Drake, stroke his beard in wonderment. And, of course, protesters of various persuasions continue to plummet into the pool of the *Swimming Club* in a rhythm as reassuring as rain during the monsoons or the fall of leaves in winter.

NON-RESIDENT INDIANS

SHASHI THAR00R



Zubin Mehta: International fame in the world of Western classical music.

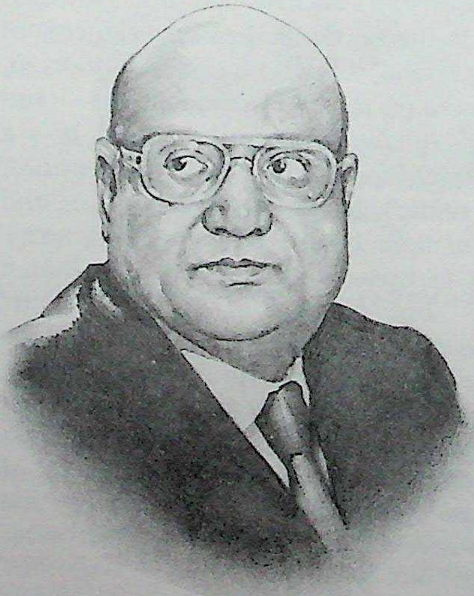
SHASHI THAROOR, is Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary- General for peace - keeping Operations.He holds a Ph. D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Since May 1978 he has worked for the United Nations,serving over 11 years with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. He is the author of numerous articles, short stories and commentaries in Indian and Western publications, and the winner of several journalism and literary awards, including the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. His books include Reasons of State (1982), The Great Indian Novel (1989) and Show Business.

INDIA is probably the only country in the world that has not only given official recognition to its expatriates, but has even devised a formal acronym for them. NRI, or Non-Resident Indian, is a term that, over the last decade, has found a firm place in the national vocabulary, though it is yet to be reflected in any dictionary. And NRIs as a breed have been granted an extraordinary range of special concessions by the Government of India, ranging from privileged rates of interest on their hard-currency deposits in Indian banks, to exclusive housing colonies, to the opportunity to import Hollywood films onto India's screens. As the nation's economists look for solutions to India's balance of payments difficulties, there is only one point on which both Government and Opposition seem to be agreed — that a vital element in any equation will be the well-heeled, and still patriotic, NRI.

Non-Resident Indians have certainly come a long way since the days when Indian Prime Ministers sanctimoniously urged them to be loyal to the foreign countries in which they had settled. As late as 1974, an Indian Foreign Minister told Parliament that "overseas Indians", as they were then known, had chosen to live abroad and so were responsible for their own condition: the Government of India had no obligation towards them. But since then New Delhi has developed expectations of its NRIs, and a reciprocal sense of obligation, too, has followed. Today NRIs are seen as people on whom the motherland — and its elected representatives — have a legitimate claim. It is a claim willingly conceded by NRIs, who, with few exceptions, continue to demonstrate a remarkable degree of interest in, and commitment to, the land of their birth (or of their forebears).

The law defines NRIs in broad terms — not just Indian citizens resident abroad, but persons of Indian "origin" irrespective of their current nationality. "A person shall be deemed to be of Indian origin," the Government explains in a promotional brochure, "if: (i) he, at any time, held an Indian passport; or (ii) he or either of his parents or any of his grandparents was an Indian and a permanent resident of undivided India at any time." New Delhi's anxiety to define the category as broadly as possible has led to some interesting terminological calisthenics. Not only can anyone with one Indian grandparent declare himself an NRI and claim the benefits of that designation, but the "wife of a citizen of India, or of a person of Indian origin, *shall also be deemed to be of Indian origin though she may be of non-Indian origin*". (Italics added. The semantic sexism is quite deliberate: the rules do not apply in reverse, to the foreign husbands of female NRIs.)

These criteria, though liberal by international standards, still omit some who are visibly of Indian origin. One obvious problem, of course, is that if the NRI definition is interpreted literally, practically every citizen of Pakistan and Bangladesh would qualify as being of "Indian" descent. (The authorities have got around the implications of this by specifically requiring Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals to obtain the prior permission of the Reserve Bank of India before seeking to avail of any NRI facilities.) The NRI definition also disqualifies descendants of some of the earlier waves of Indian migration, mainly in the last century, to such far-flung outposts of Empire as Malaya and Mauritius, Ghana and Guyana, Singapore and Surinam. In most cases, nationals of those countries, though manifestly of Indian origin, are descended from migrants of earlier generations, higher up the family tree than their grandparents. Some of those expatriate communities did, however, renew their links to their ancestral lands through marriage with Indians from India, and so even some among them have the right to the NRI designation. But the vast majority of eligible NRIs

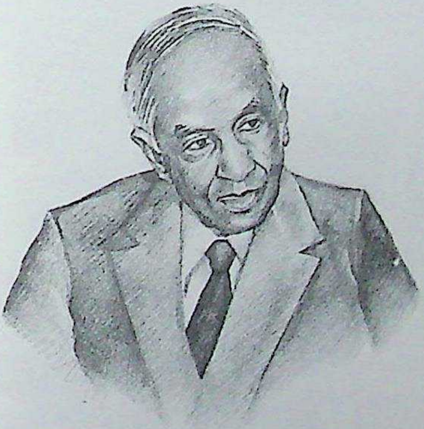


Swaraj Paul, a millionaire industrialist.

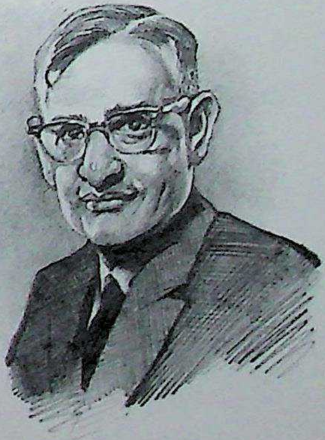
are products of more recent migrations, mainly in the later half of the 20th century.

Their stories vary. Many of the first Indian emigrants to Britain, for instance, went in search of an education and stayed on to work. Then, from the 1950s on, came less-educated members of the working class, attracted by the liberalization of British entry laws during the labour shortages of the postwar boom years. A third wave of Indians came in the 1970s via East Africa, from where many were expelled in the xenophobic fervour that swept some African states after independence. All three groups, and their offspring, have acquired a reputation for hard work, business sense and ethnic clannishness. Their success and, paradoxically, their failure to assimilate fully into British society, have made them ideal NRIs – still owing residual loyalty to their Indian past, and usually well-off enough to do something about it. This has appealed to all those in India who wish to court their support — not only the government but those opposed to it. It is no accident, of course, that some of the mother country's extremist and secessionist movements have found aid, comfort and hard cash from NRIs.

This has been particularly true in North America, though the "waves" took place in a different order. The first Indian immigrants to the US and Canada came as early as the 1890s, when shiploads of Sikhs settled on the Pacific coast and



Dr. Subramanyan Chandrasekhar, Nobel Prize for astro-physics.



Dr. Har Gobind Khorana Nobel Prize winning geneticist

Gandhi Memorial College Of Educa[illegible] Jammu

Ben Kingsley performed the Oscar winning role of Mahatma Gandhi in Richard Attenborough's film — "Gandhi".

established thriving farming communities in British Columbia and California. Racist entry-legislation — prompted by such events as anti-Indian riots in the state of Washington in 1907 — prevented them from adding to their numbers, however, and it was only a thin trickle of students who came to the US from India after the 1920s. (As late as 1935, signs on the doors of certain California establishments declared, "No jobs for Japs or Hindus".) The number of Indian students began to increase after Independence, and an increasing proportion of them stayed on, bringing high level of academic attainment and valuable scientific and engineering skills to their new country. By the early 1970s the small but influential Indian minority was estimated as having the highest per capita income of any ethnic group in the United States. (As late as 1980, the median family income of the Indian American, according to the US census of that year, was $25, 644 per annum — at a time when the median income of white American citizens was $20,800.)

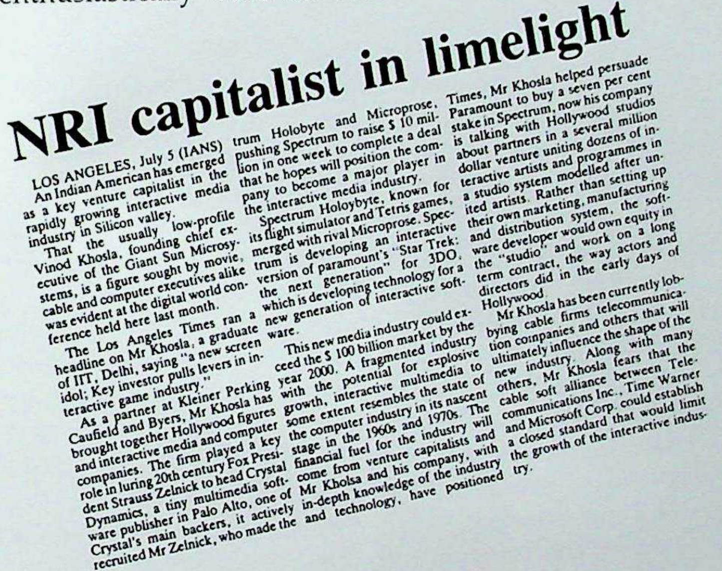
It was the more liberal Immigration Act of 1965 that opened the sluice-gates to the United States. But while the trickle of Indian professionals became a stream, in more recent years it is illegal immigration that has swelled the flow into a torrent. Working-class Indians found their way into the United States for the first time in the late 1970s and early 1980s, toiling on construction sites, taking over newspaper kiosks on street corners, operating run-down motels, cooking and serving in Indian restaurants and driving taxicabs. A pair of "amnesties" gave them the legal status they needed to bring their families over, and today (1991) this "third wave" of Indian immigrants accounts for about half of the estimated 800,000 Indians in the United States.

That figure is almost certainly an undercount, omitting as it does those who are still illegal and those who trace their direct descent from another centre of the Indian diaspora, such as the Caribbean. But allowing for the approximations that are inevitable in such an exercise, and extrapolating from a variety of sources, I have pieced together the following figures for major populations of Indian descent outside India as of mid-1991:

Malaysia	*1,230,000*
Sri Lanka	*1,075,000*
South Africa	*900,000*
Great Britain (UK)	*875,000*
United States of America	*800,000*
Mauritius	*550,000*
Trinidad & Tobago	*450,000*
Guyana	*315,000*
United Arab Emirates	*250,000*
Oman	*200,000*
Singapore	*105,000*
Yemen	*100,000*
Surinam	*95,000*
Kenya	*75,000*
Bahrain	*50,000*
Tanzania	*42,000*

There are, of course, smaller populations of Indians in a variety of countries, from some 20,000 in Hongkong to a solitary couple in El Salvador — and one lone Indian, Bezal Jesudason, on the last outpost before the North Pole, running a base camp and provision store for Arctic explorers in the wilds of the aptly-named and remote Canadian settlement of Resolute. In a statement in Parliament in May 1988, the Government of India estimated that there were some 10 million Indians living in 155 countries around the world, including eight in Iceland, four in Kampuchea and one in the Pacific Island state of Vanuatu. But the government's figures conflated Indian passport-holders with known ethnic minorities of Indian descent, and its total of 10 million — though not an unreasonable "guesstimate" — cannot be arrived at by adding up the officially-available statistics.

Though the available numbers are not therefore entirely reliable ones, one area where the figures are more easily verified is that of the financial contribution made by NRIs to their motherland. Throughout the second half of the 1980s, remittances home from NRIs —primarily the diligent Indian workers in the countries of the Arab/Persian Gulf — averaged some five thousand crores of rupees a year. As a source of foreign exchange, this amounted to 40% of India's annual merchandise exports, or some 3% to 4% of GNP. (In the state of Kerala, these remittances were responsible for generating a remarkable boom in the real estate and construction businesses, as money was poured into new housing for NRIs and land values tripled in some areas.) In addition, NRI depositors placed over nine thousand crore rupees in external deposit accounts of Indian banks during the period 1976-88. Though the levels of these contributions may change from time to time, it is easy to understand why a government strapped for hard currency enthusiastically woos the NRI.



NRI capitalist in limelight

LOS ANGELES, July 5 (IANS) An Indian American has emerged as a key venture capitalist in the rapidly growing interactive media industry in Silicon valley.

That the usually low-profile Vinod Khosla, founding chief executive of the Giant Sun Microsystems, is a figure sought by movie, cable and computer executives alike was evident at the digital world conference held here last month.

The Los Angeles Times ran a headline on Mr Khosla, a graduate of IIT, Delhi, saying "a new screen idol; Key investor pulls levers in interactive game industry."

As a partner at Kleiner Perking Caufield and Byers, Mr Khosla has brought together Hollywood figures and interactive media and computer companies. The firm played a key role in luring 20th century Fox President Strauss Zelnick to head Crystal Dynamics, a tiny multimedia software publisher in Palo Alto, one of Crystal's main backers, it actively recruited Mr Zelnick, who made the trum Holobyte and Microprose, pushing Spectrum to raise $ 10 million in one week to complete a deal that he hopes will position the company to become a major player in the interactive media industry.

Spectrum Holoybyte, known for its flight simulator and Tetris games, merged with rival Microprose. Spectrum is developing an interactive version of paramount's "Star Trek: the next generation" for 3DO, which is developing technology for a new generation of interactive software.

This new media industry could exceed the $ 100 billion market by the year 2000. A fragmented industry with the potential for explosive growth, interactive multimedia to some extent resembles the state of the computer industry in its nascent stage in the 1960s and 1970s. The financial fuel for the industry will come from venture capitalists and Mr Kholsa and his company, with in-depth knowledge of the industry and technology, have positioned Times, Mr Khosla helped persuade Paramount to buy a seven per cent stake in Spectrum, now his company is talking with Hollywood studios about partners in a several million dollar venture uniting dozens of interactive artists and programmes in a studio system modelled after united artists. Rather than setting up their own marketing, manufacturing and distribution system, the software developer would own equity in the "studio" and work on a long term contract, the way actors and directors did in the early days of Hollywood.

Mr Khosla has been currently lobbying cable firms telecommunication companies and others that will ultimately influence the shape of the new industry. Along with many others, Mr Khosla fears that the cable soft alliance between Telecommunications Inc., Time Warner and Microsoft Corp. could establish a closed standard that would limit the growth of the interactive industry.

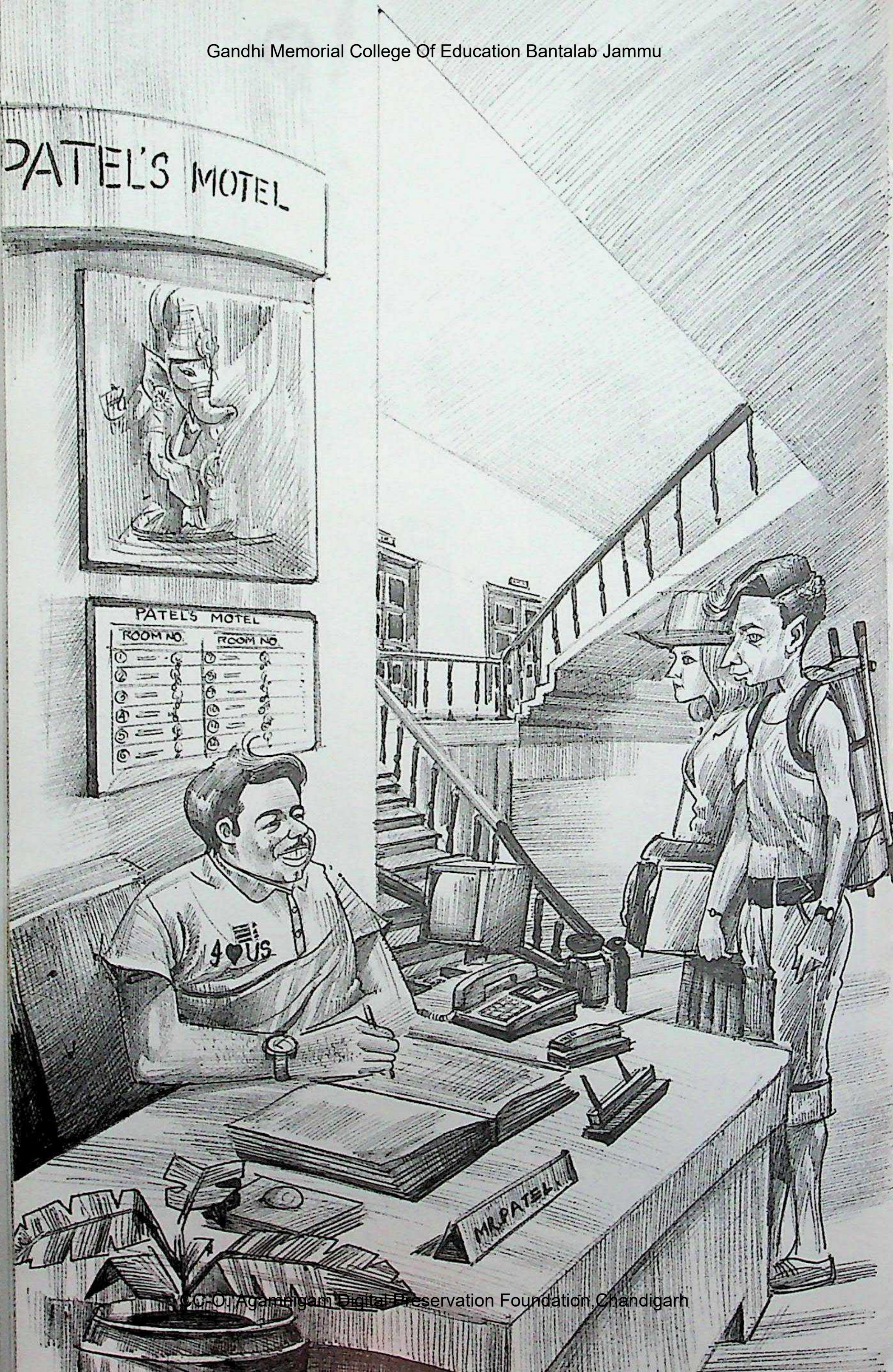
What are the elements with which the NRI can be wooed? The obvious financial incentives — special terms on bank deposits, offers of government securities and the facilitation of direct investment by NRIs in Indian industry — have already been amongst the principal features of the Indian government's approach. But NRIs want more. One increasingly vocal demand has been for dual citizenship: Indian laws oblige an NRI who takes on the passport of his country of residence to give up his Indian nationality. NRIs have long argued that this is iniquitous, because while adopting a foreign country's citizenship may be a matter of convenience (and sometimes of necessity), giving up Indian citizenship is an assault on their faith and pride. New

Delhi's official rules are based largely on the sound —though increasingly outdated — principle that one cannot owe one's loyalty to two sovereigns. NRIs argue that in today's world of large-scale and rapid migrations, the passport one holds is no proof of one's fundamental affinities and loyalties. Though not everyone's motives are entirely idealistic, most NRIs who clamour for dual citizenship do so for reasons that have more to do with emotional identification than practical advantage. In late 1991 the Government of India provided some indications that this was a demand it was prepared to consider more sympathetically than in the past.

A more thorny issue is that of the right to vote. NRIs who are Indian citizens have made the point that while they are invited, indeed expected, to make a contribution to the country's development and its balance of payments, they are allowed no role in influencing the policies of the country as voters. India is one of the few democracies in the modern world that has developed no tradition of absentee balloting for national elections, with the result that citizens living abroad are, in effect, disenfranchised. The Kerala High Court has recently admitted a petition challenging India's electoral laws. If NRI citizens are indeed given the right to vote, the politics of Kerala — a state with over a million Malayalis working abroad, and whose election results are often decided by margins of a thousand votes or fewer — would be dramatically affected. But this is not a question that is likely to be settled quickly; legal experts suggest the principles involved are likely to take the issue all the way to the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the NRI continues to make his way abroad, primarily on the strength of qualities regarded as "typically Indian" — hard work, discipline, self-sacrifice and thrift. The way in which Indians have taken over unprofitable motels across the United States, and run news stands in New York City or late-night groceries in London, is widely seen as reflective of these qualities. One American newspaper wholesaler told *The New York Times* that the Indians "basically replaced the old Jewish and Italian merchants and they've filled a tremendous void because nobody will put in the 14-and 16-hour days that they do quite willingly and that you have to put in when running a news stand." A Londoner who discovers at midnight

Salman Rushdie, the internationally known author.


PATEL'S MOTEL
PATEL'S MOTEL
ROOM NO.
ROOM NO.
I ♥ US
MR.PATEL

that she has run out of milk cheerfully decides to "go down to the local Indian". A shopper in Hongkong prefers to make her purchases at the Indian shops, rather than those run by the colony's Chinese majority, because "you always get a better deal from the Indians. They're willing to accept a smaller margin of profit than the others." Not all the comments are entirely positive. "If you have a toxic dump to clean up," wrote *The Wall Street Journal*, "there is a good chance that an Indian engineer's company will do it. Not many U.S. firms want such dirty work."

By 1986, it was estimated that 28% of the 53,629 motels and small hotels in the United States were owned by Indians, largely Indians named Patel. "In Anaheim and along San Francisco's route I and in sections of Georgia, Oklahoma and Texas," wrote American journalist James P. Sterba, "it is hard to find one that isn't." Sterba's explanation was that "the Patels were security-conscious savers, eager to own property" who took advantage of low prices and generous mortgage financing in the early 1970s. "A motel," Sterba pointed out in *The Wall Street Journal*,"provided property, home, business and employment for a large extended family." These motivations are widely considered representative of the new Indian approach to business opportunity abroad — a stark contrast to the earlier image of the studious Indian graduate who went from being every American professor's favourite research assistant to becoming the hardest-working salaried employee of banks, laboratories and research corporations. Though there are still Indian doctors and scientists of considerable renown, the new wave of Indian immigrants is demonstrating that they, too, have the enterpreneurial spirit and are prepared to take the risks that their predecessors in the professional classes largely did not.

With increasing affluence and visibility, the NRI is also beginning to develop political clout abroad, though not yet at a level comparable to his new-found political clout in India. In Britain's House of Commons, there is only one Member of Parliament of Indian origin, Keith Vaz (who was born in Aden and not on the subcontinent). The unelected House of Lords has two nominated NRI members. In the United States, there is no Indian member of Congress, though an American of Indian descent, Dalip Singh Saund, did serve three terms in the United

States House of Representatives in the early 1960s, representing a Los Angeles constituency. But if NRIs are not yet elected holders of national office, their influence on those who are is mounting. The hostility to India of certain American Congressman, particularly on the issues of Punjab and Kashmir, is directly attributable to the views — and the financial backing — of NRIs from their constituencies who are active in the "Khalistan" and Kashmiri separatist movements. Conversely, the sympathy for the Indian Government's positions usually extended by the highly-regarded Brooklyn Congressman Stephen J. Solarz is not unconnected to the help and support he regularly receives from well-heeled Indians in his New York district. In late 1991 Solarz even launched a direct-mail solicitation campaign for contributions to his re-election, targeted at voters of Indian origin.

Non-resident Indians thus represent a growing force, increasing in numbers and financial strength, beginning to flex their political muscle and widely seen as a national resource for the regeneration of their homeland. What is often overlooked in India, though, is that as individual human beings NRIs face a range of social problems implicit in the immigrant condition: alienation, anxiety about their identity, dilemmas about the values in which to bring up their children. Are NRIs just what the term implies, Indians who happen not to be resident in India, or are they Americans, Britons, Tanzanians of a different ethnicity than the majority of their new compatriots? Issues of discrimination in employment and housing, social and racial conflicts, differing levels of language skills and varying degrees of social acceptance complicate the response to this question. And whatever passports they may currently hold, their loyalties are easily impugned in their new countries: in Britain, a former Conservative Minister, Norman Tebbit, pointed out that Indian Britons at international cricket matches still supported the Indian team. Salman Rushdie has written eloquently of the dilemma of the divided self, a dilemma all NRIs, to a greater or lesser extent, live with every day.

There is thus both profit and loss in the NRI's predicament. But many would argue that, especially given the Indian government's open doors, NRIs have the best of both worlds. As the United States-based physicist E.C.G. Sudarshan put it, describing the unique situation of the NRI in relation to his home country and his country of adoption: "If you look at the world with two eyes, you see more. It is possible to live in two worlds."

TEN REMARKABLE NRI's

Dr Hargobind Khorana, Nobel Prize winning geneticist.

Dr Subrahmanyan Chandrashekhar, Nobel Prize winning astro-physicist.

Salman Rushdie, Booker Prize winning novelist.

Ben Kingsley, Oscar winning actor.

Swaraj Paul, millionaire industrialist.

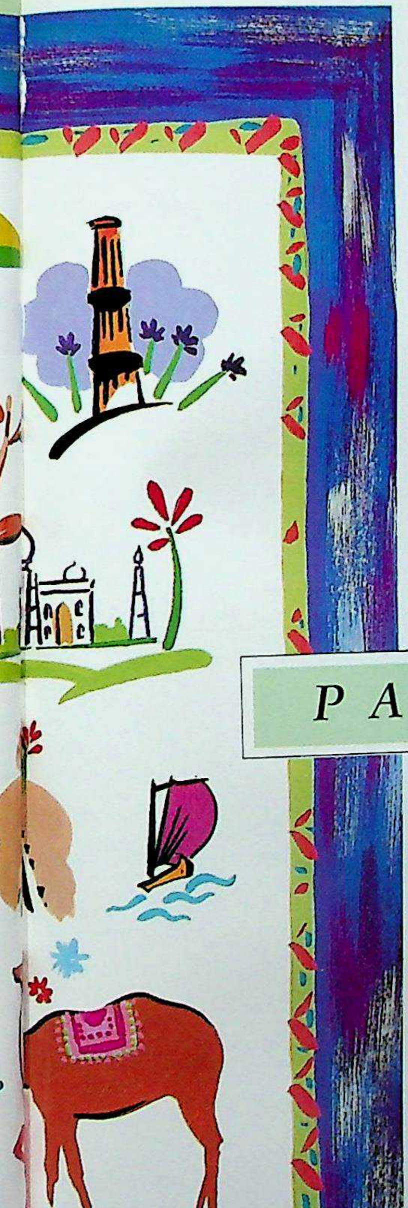
Zubin Mehta, outgoing conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Amar Bose, inventor of "the world's best speakers" for souna systems.

Hari Harilela, businessman, "the richest man in Hongkong".

Nasser Hussain, English Test cricketer.

Didar Singh Bains, the United States' biggest peach farmer.



INDIAN TOURISM : BEYOND BEAUTIFUL CLICHES

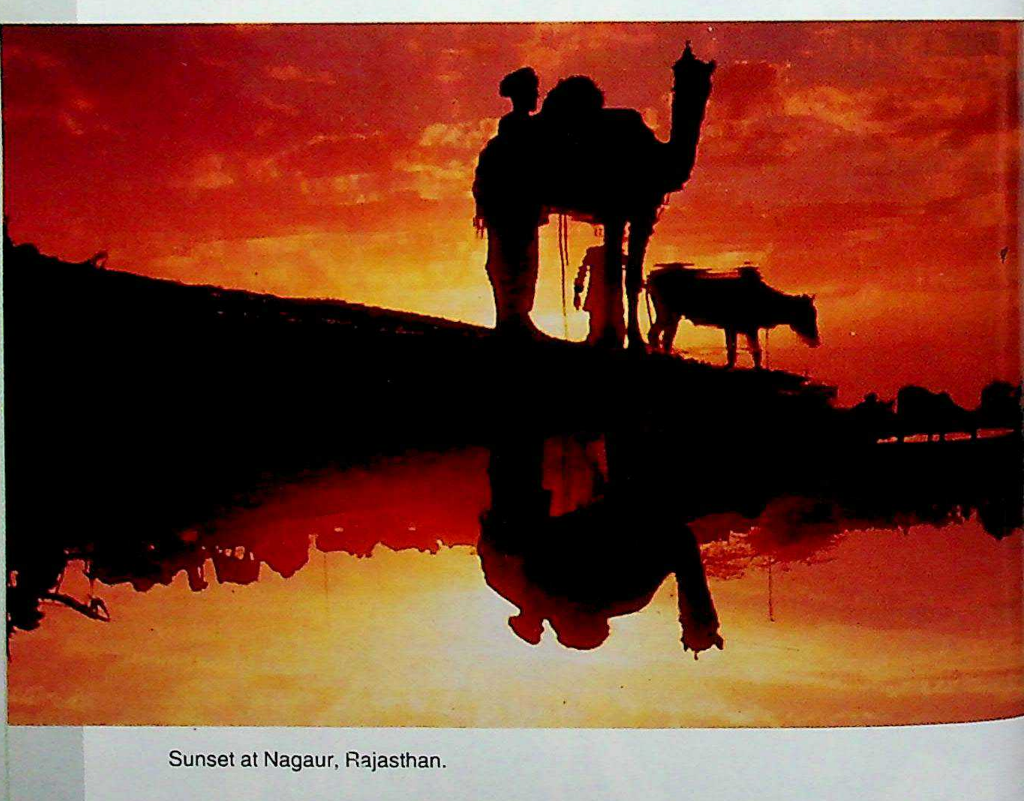
PART FOUR

TEN OF THE MOST MEMORABLE TRAIN RIDES IN INDIA

TRACKING DOWN INDIA

INDIAN TOURISM : BEYOND BEAUTIFUL CLICHÉS

HUGH & COLLEEN GANTZER



Sunset at Nagaur, Rajasthan.

HUGH & COLLEEN GANTZER are a husband-and-wife freelance writer-photographer team who launched India's first travel column in a national newspaper in India. Today their nine travel columns a month and other travel features appear in newspapers and magazines with a combined circulation of over a million. Their TV documentaries include the half-hour, 24-episode travel serial "Looking Beyond with Hugh & Colleen Gantzer" telecast on India's national network and re-telecast three times. They have received the Gold Award of the Pacific Asia Travel Association twice.

"APART from Kashmir and the Taj", he asked, "what else have you got?" He was a travel agent and we were with him at a tourism mart in Germany.

We didn't smile at his ignorance. We've come across it before. The folk who control our tourism publicity overseas are often as ill-informed as he was. Moreover, in trying to be even-handed between the many conflicting claims of our states, faiths and ethnic groups, our politically-sensitive administrators spread the message too thin. India's tourism image abroad has been diluted by a flood of forgettable clichés.

We have got to be creative to sell the right destination to the right people. Our choices are limited only by our knowledge.

India has a variety of terrain and climate unmatched by any single country in the world. We have filmed in the high-altitude plains of Ladakh, our Little Tibet; and on the sand dunes of the Thar, the Great Indian Desert, where camels plod: the air is dry and clear in these widest of wide open spaces. We have also walked in the Andaman's tropical rain forests; they are often so dense, so impenetrable, that they could well harbour creatures still unknown to science. And we have drifted in glass-bottomed boats over mirror-still blue coral lagoons in the fantasy seas of Lakshadweep. In the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas in which we live, we have the world's largest area under ice and snow after the polar regions; and the greatest range of white water. We have flown over and swum off and walked on most of the beaches that stretch along our 7,516.5 km coastline: silver sand and golden sand and ebony sand and pebbles; beaches with green curling surf, and sheltered coves, and fascinating reefs and scuba-inviting wrecks; and horizon-touching strands where our shadows stretched long in the sunset and ours were the only footprints in the sand. In the humid east, where the rivers flow brown and turgid, we have put-putted in an *African Queen* boat through bayous and creeks hemmed in by silent mangrove swamps where the Royal Bengal Tiger prowls. In the jade-green backwaters and the polder lands of the south we have watched slim, 100-oared, war-boats flash past in a flurry of spray and chanting. And on the coffee-covered slopes of the Shevaroy mountains we have identified a small temple which could well be the world's oldest living shrine.

Above : Jade-green backwaters of Kerala.
Below : Sand dunes of the 'Thar' desert,Rajasthan.

But all this wealth and wonder has remained untapped because our administrators were obsessed with clichés. To many of them, India's tourist attractions began and ended with Kashmir and the Golden Triangle: Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. When tourism in Sri Lanka collapsed, when unrest in the north kept tourists out of Kashmir and the Triangle, we had no alternatives ready because the potential of the west, south and the east had not been developed. Even the much-trumpeted Visit India Year fell flat on its face not, primarily, because of the Gulf War, but because we had not planned an effective marketing strategy.

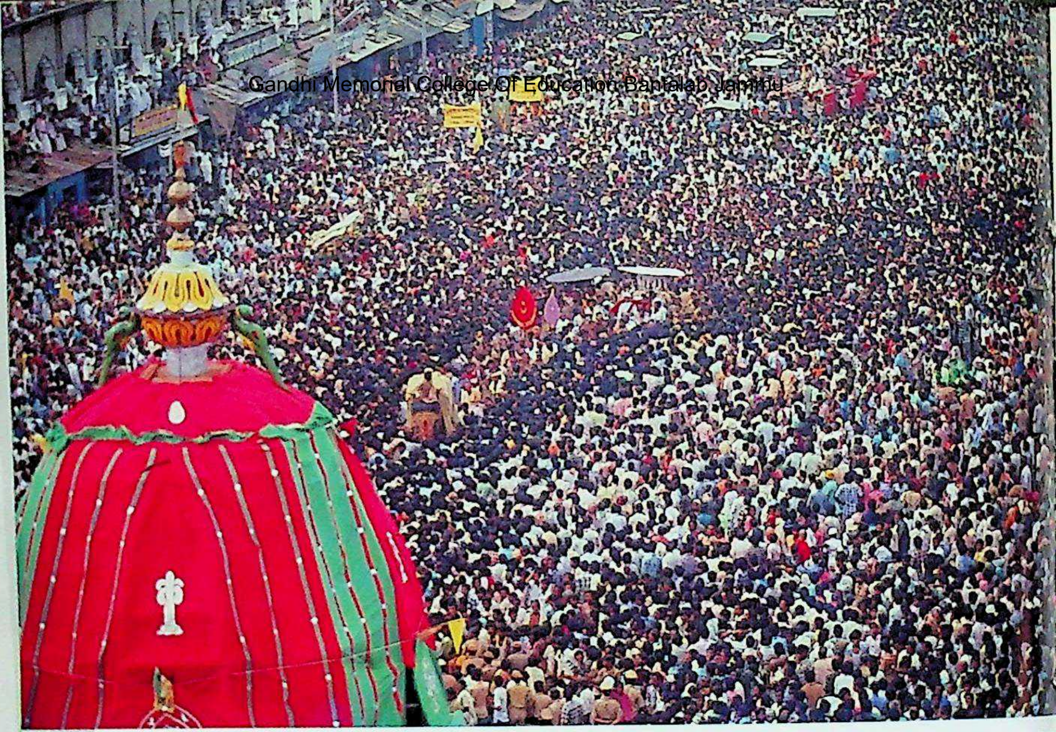
We have also failed to mount a vigorous campaign to cushion the impact of militancy. Karnataka is further from Kashmir than England is from Ireland, Madrid from Bilbao, the latter in the Basque region of Spain. And yet the militant activities of the IRA, the Basque separatists, have not diminished tourist traffic into England and Spain. Why have events in Kashmir and Punjab been allowed to affect tourism into India? These were some of the wasted opportunities of Indian tourism.

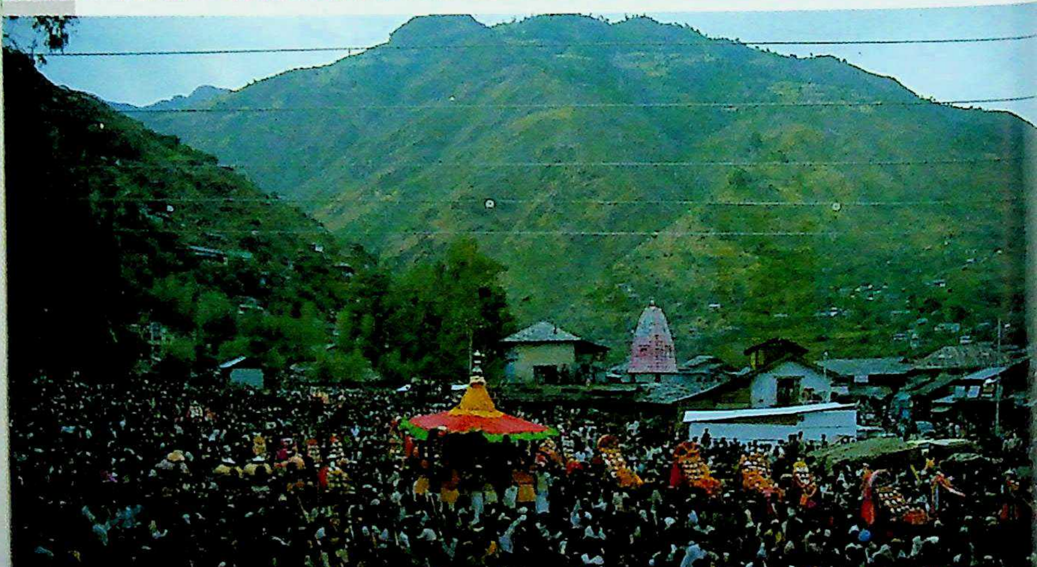
Sadly, over the years, our politicians developed a rather pompous and hypocritical attitude to *laissez-faire* a result of their perception of good order in a socialist economy. They tried to clip, sanitize and restrain creativity by regulations, permits and licences. India's innovative tourism entrepreneurs had, therefore, to seek the assistance of the very politicians who had clamped on the shackles in the first place. They, alone, could cut through the fetters: for a price!

Consequently, international tourism has been the greatest victim of the virtually closed economy that was India's.

But there is a silver lining: there always is in resilient India. 4,000 years of unbroken civilization have built a certain sinewy toughness into the Indian spirit.

Even the strongest administrator and the most arrogant politician have not been able to stifle the people's urge to travel in their own land. Pilgrimages to the four corners of India have been an obligatory part of the domestic tourism scene ever since the 8th century seer, Shankaracharya, established four major shrines: in the Himalayas, and in the east, south and west coasts.





Above : Rath Yatra is a spectacular procession of devotees pulling the gigantic chariot of Lord Jagannath in Puri, Orissa.
Below : Tradition, spectacle and exuberance mark the Dussehra Mela in the Kulu Valley. At the fair a large number of people gather under the auspicies of Lord Raghunath.

And there are literally thousands of other pilgrim-attracting shrines all over India.

Pilgrims by the hundreds of thousands still move in great groups across the land dwarfing into insignificance the pilgrimages to Lourdes and other Christian shrines. The primitive facilities, once tolerated by our religious tourists as a merit-enhancing hardship, have given way to air-conditioned comforts in many of these holy destinations. The foreign traveller, seeking to know more about India, would do well to visit such places because, as Bath and Canterbury used to be in Chaucer's day, they are also cultural centres enshrining traditions which often go back more than 40 centuries to pre-Aryan times. Some temples, particularly those in Orissa and a few in Kerala, are still restricted to 'Hindus Only', but most will allow non-Hindus to enter if they sign a formal statement that they respect the worship of the presiding deity. We, as practising Christians, have been welcomed into most temples including one established by the Shankaracharya. Sometimes, however, we've had a tough time walking across sun-scorched, stone-paved, courts on our bare feet!

Pilgrimages were the traditional motivations to travel. Five modern developments, however, have led to renewed outpourings of domestic tourism: the TV explosion, the long weekend, Leave Travel Concessions, the computerized printing of rail tickets, and the indigenously manufactured and fuel-efficient Maruti car.

With 510 transmitters covering 82 per cent of the population and 67.6 per cent of the area, India has an enormous TV network. Its impact on the mores of the growing middle-class, estimated at 200 million people, is stupendous. The rising aspirations of the young, especially the young two-income couples, have found a new outlet in travel. Honeymoon trips are now *de rigueur*. The response to our 24-part, travel-in-India serial is still strong, particularly among children, youth, women and that middle-class bastion — the small-town family. Our TV series catered to a need which tourism pundits are slow to acknowledge. Domestic travellers want to know more about India so that they can make their own travel plans, but they don't have easy access to such information. When they get the information, they travel.

This is why the long weekends coupled with the purring Marutis have given rise to a very Western type of Friday exodus from major cities. On Saturdays and Sundays, affluent domestic tourists holiday in the mountains, beaches and countryside within a familiar 300 km of crowded urban centres. Highway resorts, like those courageously pioneered by far-seeing tourism bureaucrats S.K. 'Chappie' Misra and Ashok Pahwa in Haryana, have sprung up in many other states to cater to these travellers. Satellite destinations are developing as more popular resorts are becoming overcrowded.

The Leave Travel Concession, which permits a government employee to take his family on a travel-paid holiday anywhere in India, has led to a major growth of coach tour organizations, fertilising the grass-roots of our economy better than any five-year plan and its subsidies can do. Computerized rail reservations have taken many of the more formidable obstacles out of rail travel. We use computerized rail reservations at the beginning and end of at least half of the trips we make around India for six months every year.

Most Indians cannot afford to use Indian Airlines for their holiday travel, but the growing ferment of domestic tourism activity is having a direct and lasting impact on international tourism into India.

Tourism activity in the developed world evolved from the towns and worked its way up. The role of the national government in tourism development was merely that of a co-ordinator. In India, as in most developing countries, on the other hand, it was imposed from the top.

Today, however, there is a welling up from below. Our burgeoning domestic tourism, spurred by the ambitions of the rising middle-class, has created a market for increasingly sophisticated goods and services. Senior executives, used to international standards abroad, have demanded and got international standards from hotels, hired cars, restaurants and holiday destinations. Even from our national airlines, to some extent. The top of the domestic tourism market is no longer the bottom of the international one: their needs run neck and neck. And while Indian tolerance levels are still more than those of most foreigners, this too is evening out.

Consequently, Indian tourism is finally poised to grow internationally from firm domestic tourism foundations. Responding to that very basic Indian urge to be free from bureaucratic strait-jackets, some of the suggestions we made years ago are now being given concrete shape: toll Expressways, mini-cities in International Airports, pedestrian malls in city centres, matrix tourism drawing on the aspirations of local residents.

This compulsion to abandon grey socialist shibboleths in the search for a better life could result in a sea change in Indian tourism. All it calls for is a change of attitude.

There is an exciting world of wonder awaiting the traveller, beyond the clichés of the "Beautiful Vale of Kashmir and the Immortal Taj".

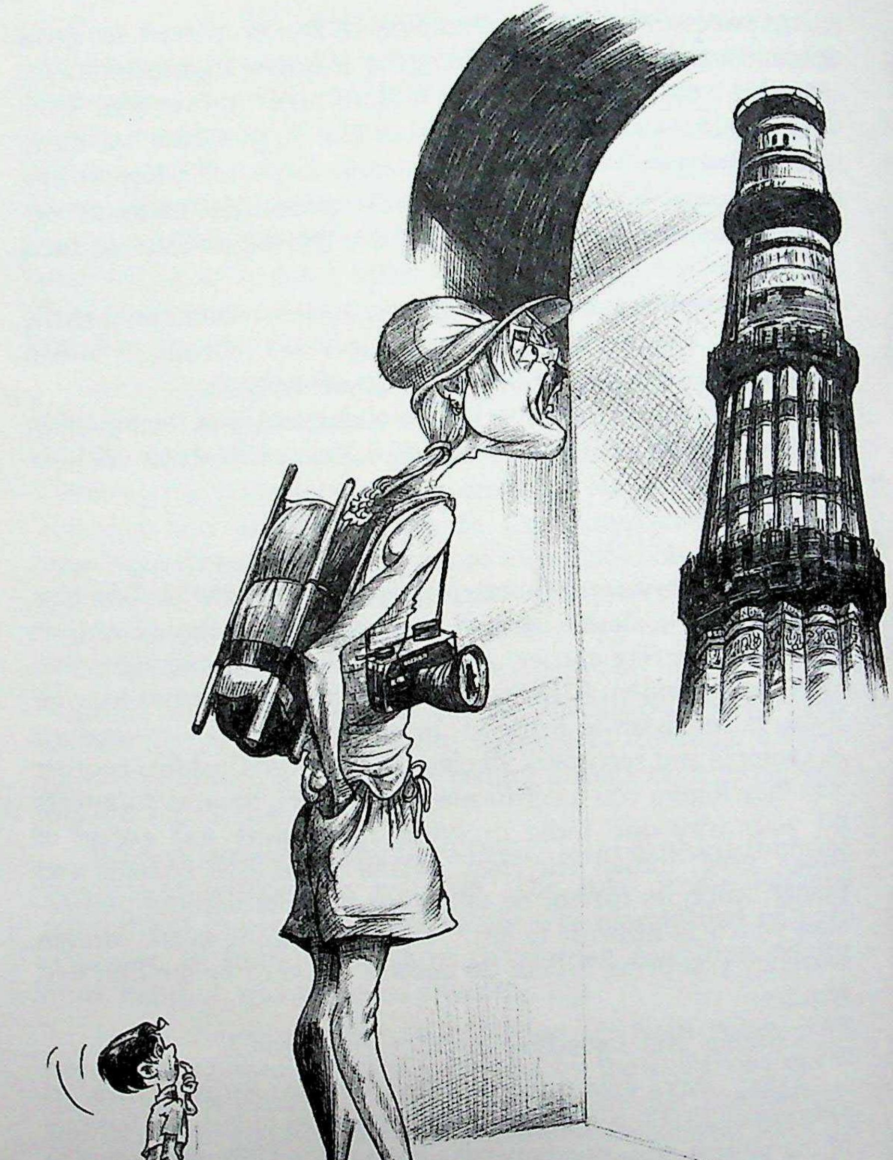
India's main international airports are at Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta served by major international airlines including the flag carrier, Air-India. Internal flights are on the state-owned Indian Airlines. Most foreigners need visas to enter India. If you wish to bring in durables for your own use such as cameras and recorders, declare them at the Customs counter and they'll give you a certificate which you'll have to surrender on your way out. India prohibits the import and export of drugs, gold, Indian currency, animal skins, live animals and plants. Antiques cannot be taken out of India without permission which is difficult to get. There is no limit to the foreign currency you bring in, but do declare it. Do carry the film you require.

Coaches and taxis link the airports to town.

Every day, government-owned Indian Airlines flies an average of 25,000 passengers across the skies of India. It has one of the largest domestic networks outside the USA and wings to 67 destinations including 10 in 8 neighbouring countries.

The 'third level' airline, Vayudoot, was started as a specific community service and is likely to change its character when it has fulfilled its purpose.

International carrier Air-India flies passengers on some domestic routes.



The Qutab Minar (New Delhi) started by Qutab-ud-din Aibak in 1199,completed by Iltutmish, is made of red sandstone. It stands at a height of 288 ft. and is the highest tower in India.

Private air taxi services are still fledglings.

If IA passengers break journey for more than 72 hours, they should have their air tickets reconfirmed. Adult passengers have a free allowance of 30 kg of booked baggage in Executive and 20 kg in Economy Class. The length plus the breadth plus the height of your hand baggage should not total more than 115 cm. Do not carry batteries, even button batteries in your cameras, knives, scissors, sharp instruments, tools, firearms, ammunition or replicas of any of these in your hand baggage or on your person: they have all been used by international hijackers! If you've paid in US dollars you don't have to pay cancellation charges when you opt out of a flight for which you have a confirmed ticket.

You should check in 2 hours before the departure of an Airbus flight from Srinagar; 90 minutes before a Boeing flight from Srinagar, Jammu and Leh; 75 minutes before other Airbus domestic flights; 60 minutes before all other domestic flights. Make sure you're at the counter two hours thirty minutes before an international flight. Counters close 45 minutes before the departure of an international flight, and 30 minutes before all other flights.

Sorry, you can't smoke in the aircraft on IA's domestic flights.

In May 1988, the National Committee on Tourism submitted its report to the Planning Commission. Commenting on Indian tourism's foreign exchange earnings it said:

"... in dollar terms, an almost continually declining trend since 1980-81 is indicated."

Its *Table No.3, Foreign Exchange Earnings (constant prices)* showed that in 1980-81, India received 0.80 million tourists, earned Rs 527.10 crores or US $ 702.37 million which worked out to Rs 6,588.75 or US $ 877.96 per tourist. Three years later, in 1983-84, our international tourist arrivals had risen to 0.88 million, our earnings had fallen to Rs 370.43 crores (US $ 493.83 million) or Rs 4,209.43 (US $ 561.17) per tourist. Another three years later there was a further decline in earnings per tourist.

Above : Luxury suite in a five-star hotel.
Below : Bukhara Restaurant in the Maurya Sheraton Hotel and Towers, New Delhi.

Though we received 1.08 million tourists in 1986-87 and earned Rs 400.89 crores (US $ 543.49) million the earnings per tourist were only Rs. 3,711.94 or a low US $ 494.90.

Commented the Committee:

"The proportion of high spenders among foreign tourists has fallen in recent years and that of low-budget visitors has risen."

And then it added :

"... the declining trend of earnings per tourist brings out in sharp focus the weaknesses of our programme and policy prescriptions."

It also said:

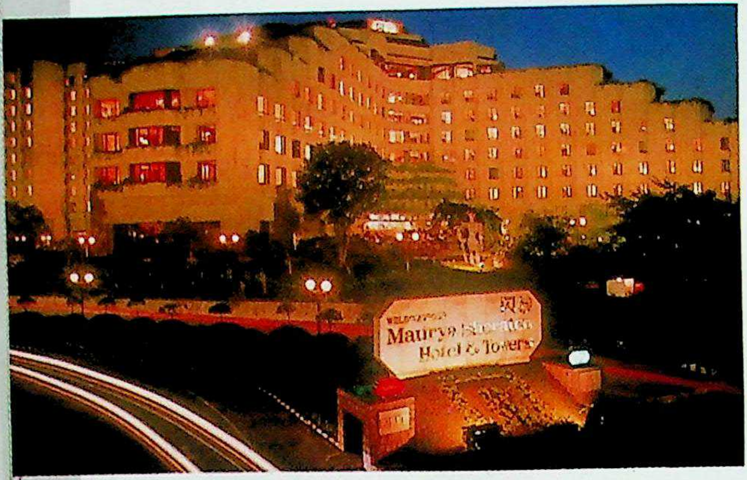
"Keeping in view the target of 2.75 to 3 million foreign tourist arrivals ..., tourism has the potential of earning foreign exchange worth Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 crores by 2000 A.D. at 1986-87 prices."

India has the widest range of hotels in any developing country, from pensions in Ladakh and Goa, through state-run tourist bungalows and forest lodges to luxury hotels listed amongst the best in the world.

The major luxury chains are the Taj, Oberois, Welcomgroup and the government-owned Ashok which is the hotel wing of the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). Some of these chains run hotels in London (the British Royal family hosted a formal banquet in one of them), New York, Washington DC, Chicago, Melbourne, Cairo, Bali and other destinations. Foreign chains like Holiday Inns, Sheraton, Quality International, Intercontinental, Hyatt, Meridien, Radisson and the Lufthansa chain Kempinski have tied up with hotels in India.

Tariffs for foreigners are generally quoted in dollars in up-market hotels. Some hotels require foreigners to pay in dollars: enquire before you check in. Bell-boys will be happy with the equivalent of a one dollar tip, 10 per cent of the bill is the accepted tip in restaurants, doormen may be tipped in departure, taxi drivers are not tipped unless they have gone out their way to be helpful.

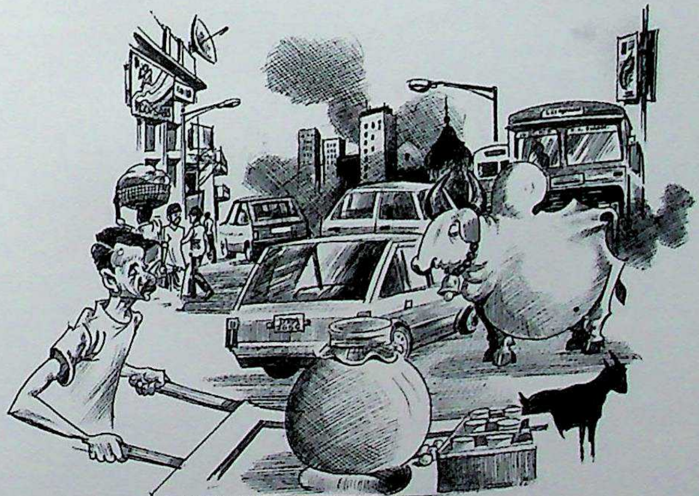
Food in good hotels and restaurants is very safe; in the more expensive speciality restaurants it can be gourmet cuisine. If you want to sample ethnic roadside eating, make sure the food is



ITC, Welcomgroup,
Maurya Sheraton
Hotel and Towers,
New Delhi.

hot when it reaches you. Do not eat fresh salads and unpeeled fruit from wayside stalls. Non-fizzy mineral water in sealed bottles is available and safe.

If coach owners agree to a voluntary classification of their vehicles into star categories, falling in line with the International Coach Classification of the IRU, we will not only have upgraded our surface transports but we will also have sent a clear message worldwide that we are ready, willing and able to meet international standards. The Indian Railways could run special luxury tourist trains on a Delhi-Calcutta-Madras-Bombay-Delhi route, hauling its coaches at night and stopping at sidings in the day to send its passengers on coach tours: a very comfortable and hassel-free way of seeing India. Most railway stations, for that matter, are low buildings occupying prime land. They could be expanded up and out to convert them into Tourist Hubs with modest and clean accommodation, restaurants, shops and bus and coach terminals like the one which serves Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport. We need to create centres of excellence with state-of-the-art tourist facilities: tourist resorts reserved for foreign-exchange-paying customers should be established in duty-free, exclusive Tourist Zones. Our major rivers are major tourism resources: they could be effectively used for up-market river cruises as the Nile is used by Egypt. We must give the visitor more opportunities to spend his foreign exchange: we would introduce Australia's excellent system of down-town duty-free shops for departing tourists. Gambling is almost a religious duty in our land during certain festivals: responding to this hoary tradition top-of-the-market hotels should be allowed to run casinos for people with foreign exchange. We have many more festivals in our country than there are days in the year: we should produce an annually up-dated five-year Directory of Festivals so that visitors could plan their itineraries to take in a festival or two. Many of our tour guides tend to drone on and on and on soporifically: coaches used on regular city tours should have recorded commentaries with point-of-interest sections activated by the driver. Similarly we should instal coin-in-the-slot multilingual recorded commentaries in all major monuments. Visitors are hassled by guards in many of the monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India: the ASI should sell all-inclusive tickets to visit and photograph a number of monuments under its protection. Tourists have the right to expect that trains, buses and aircraft run on time: a travel insurance should be built into every transportation tariff paid in foreign exchange to compensate travellers for delays and cancellations.



Above : Rohtang Pass, 3915m high in the Himachal Himalayas.
Below : A Tiger in the Kanha National Park.

India is being discovered as the world's most varied Activities Tourism destination. We're not talking of rugged Adventure Tourism only though that is part of it — but of holidays spent doing outdoorsy things.

Let's start from the least strenuous and work our way up to the really difficult.

The hill stations of India, largely created by the British to escape the heat of summers in the plains, are great for walking, hiking, bird-watching. Or you can use them as a base for pony-trekking or camping out in the mountains. *Sikkim* is also wonderful for all this plus rhododendron blossoms and orchids. The mountains of *Ladakh* are a shade more difficult, appreciably more stark, and a bit more lonely. If, however, *Kashmir* should open up for tourists, its beautiful alpine terrain will become the greatest for such activities.

Canoeing, sailing, kayaking are becoming increasingly popular on virtually every major inland water surface in India, particularly if it's near a major town.

Goa offers sailing, surfing, speed-boating, water-skiing, water-scootering, para-sailing, rowing, snorkelling and wind-surfing. You can also get snorkelling and scuba-diving in the *Andaman Islands* and in one coral island in *Lakshadweep: Bangaram.* Both groups of islands are ecologically fragile so do contact a good travel agent to handle the formalities.

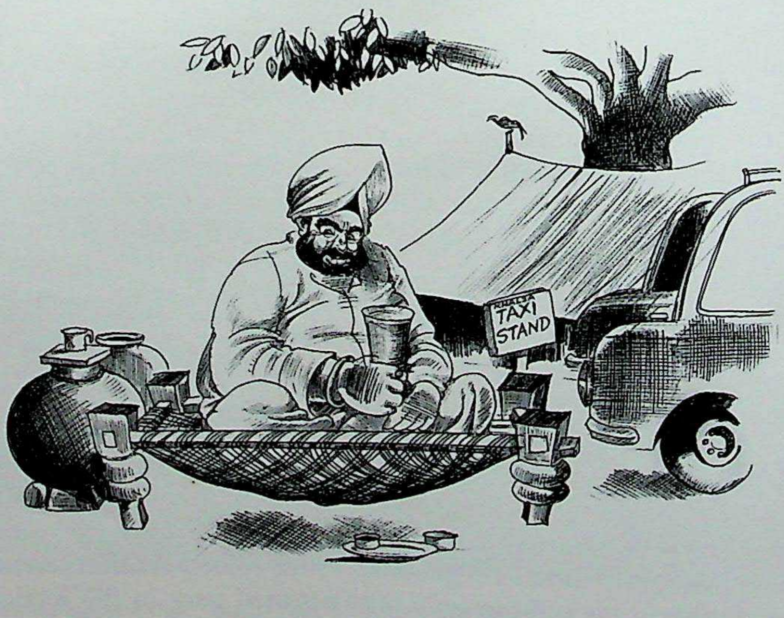
Rock climbing, trekking and desert safaris are often organized by the Youth Hostels Association of India, part of the International Youth Hostel Federation. Private operators also offer all these adventures. These are year-round activities because there are challenging rock-faces and trekking areas all over India (though our desert is only in *Rajasthan*), so when it's too cold or too hot or too wet in one part it's just right in a number of places elsewhere. You can also get in fairly easy skiing in the winter in the Himalayas of *Himachal* and *Uttar Pradesh.*

If you're a wildlife enthusiast, we have a wide range of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries which specialize in everything from water birds to rhinos to elephants to tigers, wild asses, rare mountain goats and even rarer Asian lions who are found in the wild in only one national park in the world.

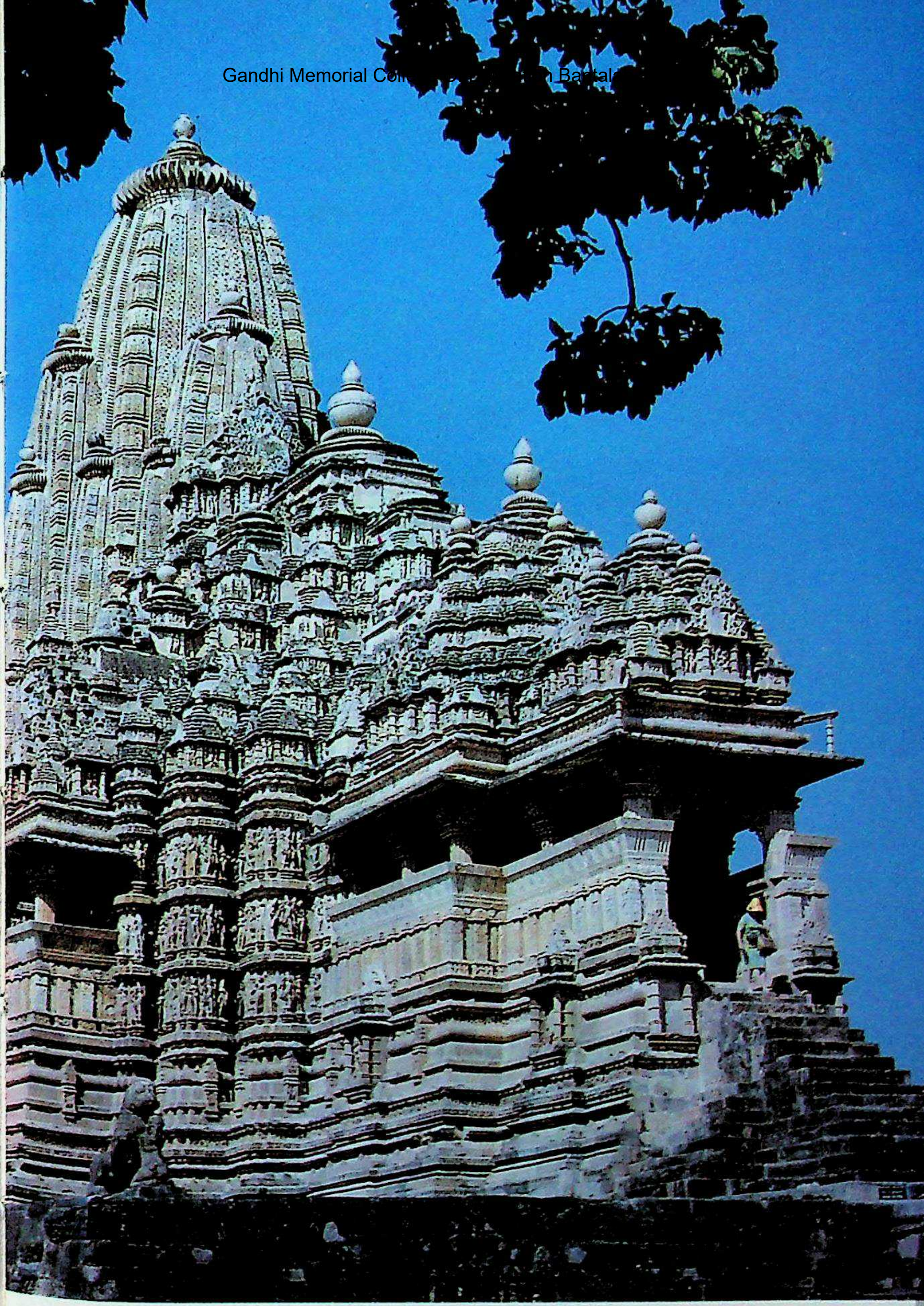
Our national parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are rugged. Don't expect to nurse a sundowner in a cocktail lounge while the animals parade past. You'll have to dress in jungle-merging shades and do long trips through the jungle in jeeps or on elephant back. But when you have a close encounter with a rhino in his marsh, a herd of elephants at the reedy edges of a lake, a pride of regal Asian lions in a thorn-scrub wilderness, a tiger at a kill, you'll know, for the first time, what a wildlife adventure is all about.

Something a little more rugged? Try running the rapids in *Ladakh*, the *Garhwal Himalayas* and in the *Teesta* in the north-east. Just sign on with any one of a number of adventure tour outfits operating in these areas.

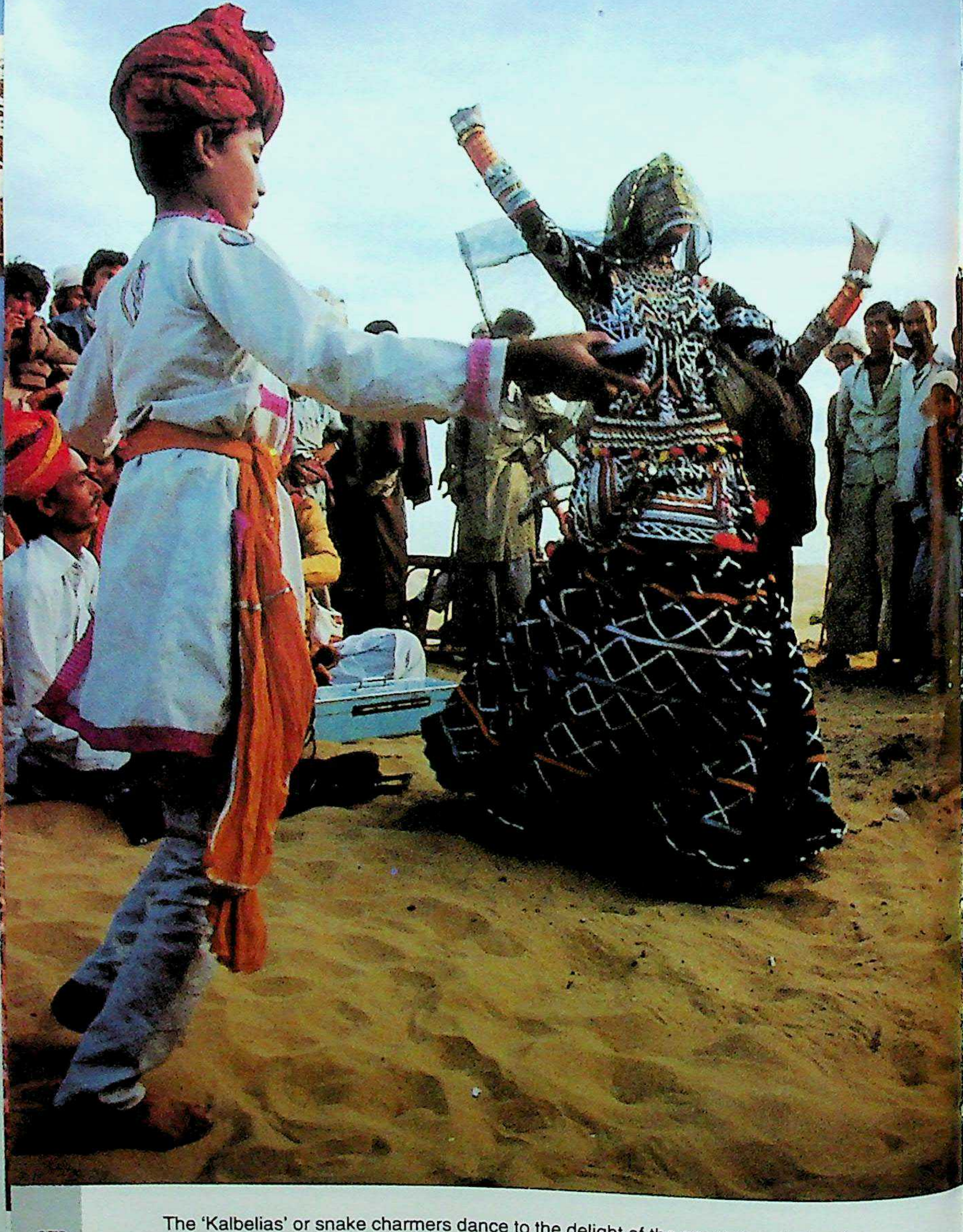
Still not rugged enough? Try hang-gliding: strap on a delta wing, leap off a cliff and soar. It's best established in *Himachal* but it's been tried elsewhere and we've even captured a naval officer winging off a hang-gliding platform in the south-eastern port of *Visakhapatnam*. He was the hang-gliding champion of India. Hang-gliding equipment is being manufactured in India and the world championships were held here in May 1991.



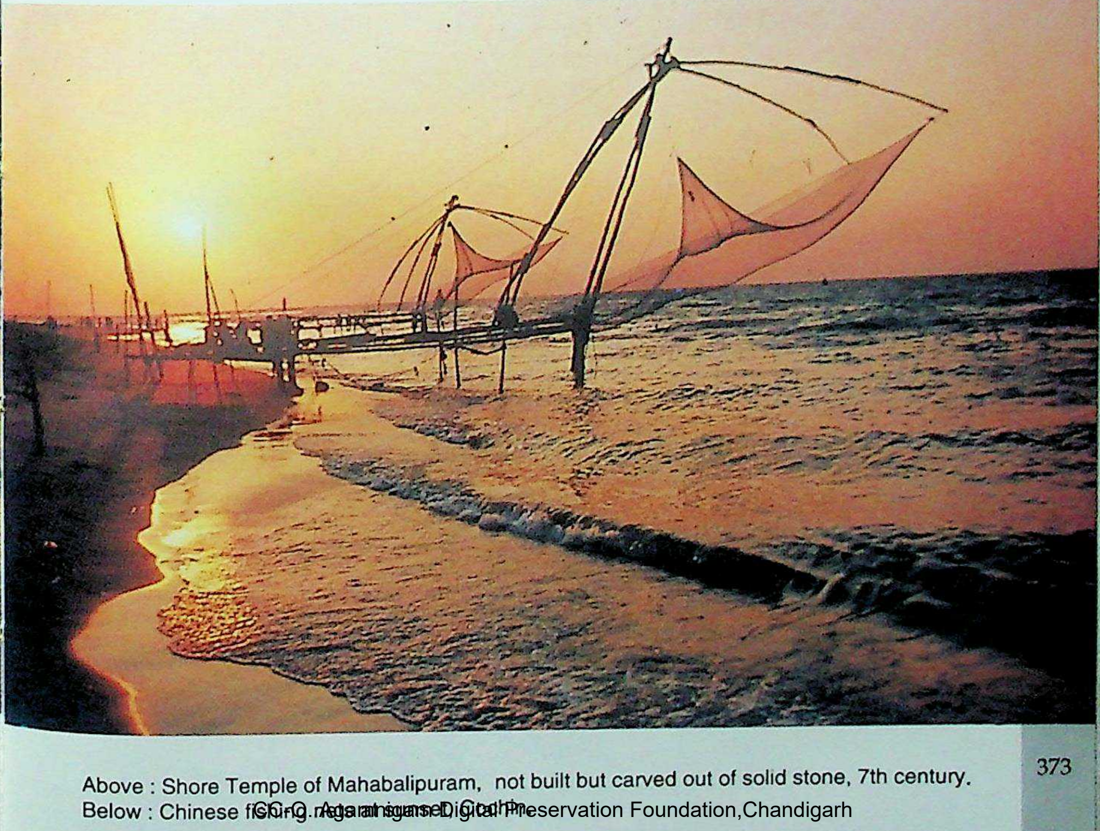
Gandhi Memorial Col Ba tal



Kandariya Mahadev Temple at Khajuraho,built in the era of Chandella rajas, 11th century.



The 'Kalbelias' or snake charmers dance to the delight of the spectators during the Desert Festival, Rajasthan.



Above : Shore Temple of Mahabalipuram, not built but carved out of solid stone, 7th century.
Below : Chinese fishing nets at sunset, Cochin.

OUR 'MUST SEE' PLACES

The Taj Mahal, Agra, U.P. : Every time we see it,it's more beautiful than the last.

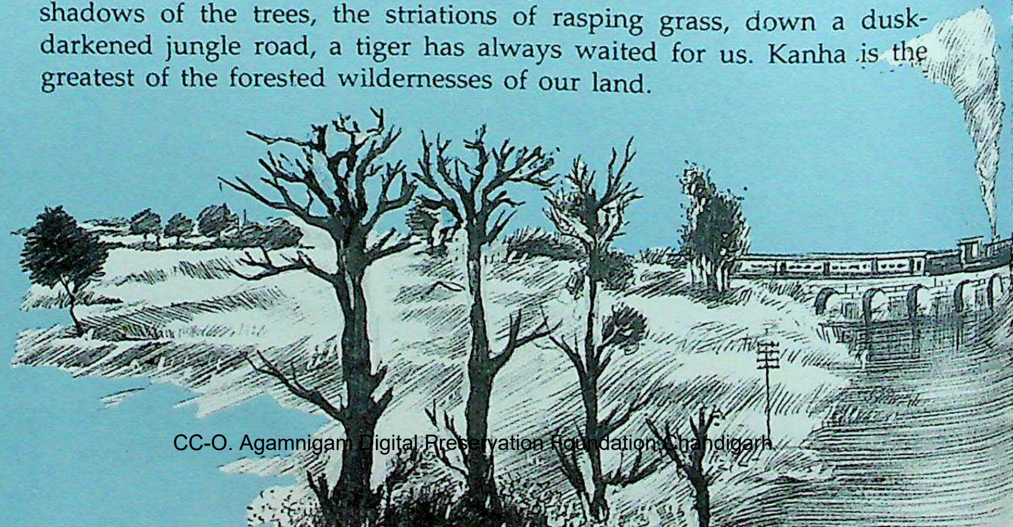
Lamayuru Monastery, Ladakh, J&K: The most starkly beautiful sight we have ever seen. The monastery grows out of the bare and painted mountains of Ladakh rising above an eerie moonscape.

The Backwaters of Kerala : Glossy jade-green waters, palm-hung, with little huts dotting the canal banks. Peaceful, very peaceful, after the hoarse, spraying, frenzy of the world's biggest team sport, the Nehru Trophy Boat Race in Alleppey at the edge of the still backwaters.

The Meteor Crater of Lonar, Maharashtra: The great blue eye of the crater lake gazes unwinking at one from the dead centre of this enormous hollow. It's wooded in the crater, water-birds swim and whistle through the half-submerged trees in the lake and ruined temples stand chittering with bats along its soft edges. And all the while, trembling in the mind, is the vision of the screaming, flaming visitor from the void 900 lifetimes ago.

Jaisalmer, Rajasthan: Rising like a traveller's dream from the sands of the Thar. Jaisalmer is the Arabian Nights, and mansions carved like frozen lace, and *Kim*, and camels chewing the cud in the shadow of the sandstone turrets of the fort. And the magic of the Desert Festival where warriors with brigand moustaches leap with flashing swords while flaming torches flicker.

The Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh: Somewhere in the shadows of the trees, the striations of rasping grass, down a dusk-darkened jungle road, a tiger has always waited for us. Kanha is the greatest of the forested wildernesses of our land.



Sunrise from Tiger Hill, Darjeeling, West Bengal: Out of the chill dark of pre-dawn the light grows like a faint sough of wood-winds. And then, in the distance, the greatest peaks of the world emerge, blue, mauve, orchid, rose, dusty pink, lemon, gold, brażenly harsh-edged against the black. Aloof Kanchenjunga. Mighty Everest. Their silver-headed courtier-crests clustered in cowls of snow. It's an awesome, spine-tingling, experience.

The Coral Gardens of Lakshadweep : We floated over a million-year-old fantasy world where creatures like stars walked through crusted towers of living stone, constellations moved in brilliant arrays, a delta-winged ray flew slowly, searching, searching. Our shadow passed over that world, unrecorded; as the centuries passed, unrecorded. There is no time in such Disneyscapes designed by Dali for the Wizard of Oz.

Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu : Multi-layered mysteries, one inside the other. What is the real meaning of the great carving on the rock which is not Arjun's penance ? Why is there a Shivling in the Shore Temple of Vishnu? Why did the sculptors flee, generation after generation ? What tales are those expressive stones trying to tell?

The Dussehra Festival in Kulu, Himachal : When the gods and goddesses —gold and garlanded masks in swaying palanquins — come down from the hills and red apples hang from the trees, and the great drums and trumpets sound: the pre-Aryan divinities bestride the valley again. This is the last of the caravan festivals when traders returning from Tibet, before snow sealed the passes, gave thanks to their Himalayan immortals. For all those ancient festive days we live in legends and pre-history. This is a separate reality.

TEN OF THE MOST MEMORABLE TRAIN RIDES IN INDIA.

BILL AITKEN

Toy train of Darjeeling at Ghoom.

BILL AITKEN was born in Scotland in 1934, studied Indian Philosophy at Leeds and hitch-hiked to India in 1959, where enchanted by her culture he became a naturalized citizen in 1972. He treks the Himalayas from his base in Mussoorie and is Hon. Librarian of the Himalayan Club. His other passion is steam locomotion and he has covered the subcontinent by rail from Ledo to Bhuj, from Shimla to Kanyakumari. Author of Seven Sacred Rivers, his other travelogues (both in the press) describe expeditions to Nanda Devi and excursions on Indian Railways.

TIRUPATI is a small but clean pilgrim town in south Andhra which boasts of the world's richest temple. My first two choices of journeys that stand out in the memory refer to different trains that take you to Tirupati. The first is the *Puri-Tirupati Express* that runs down the east coast on the broad gauge and is not in a desperate hurry to compete with the *Mallard*. But with the exhilarating *WP* steam locomotive up front the mix of billowing ocean and shovelling steam made this a perfect outing both relaxed without any press of passengers and exciting when I goaded the driver into letting the 30-year-old Indian "Pacific" show her paces.

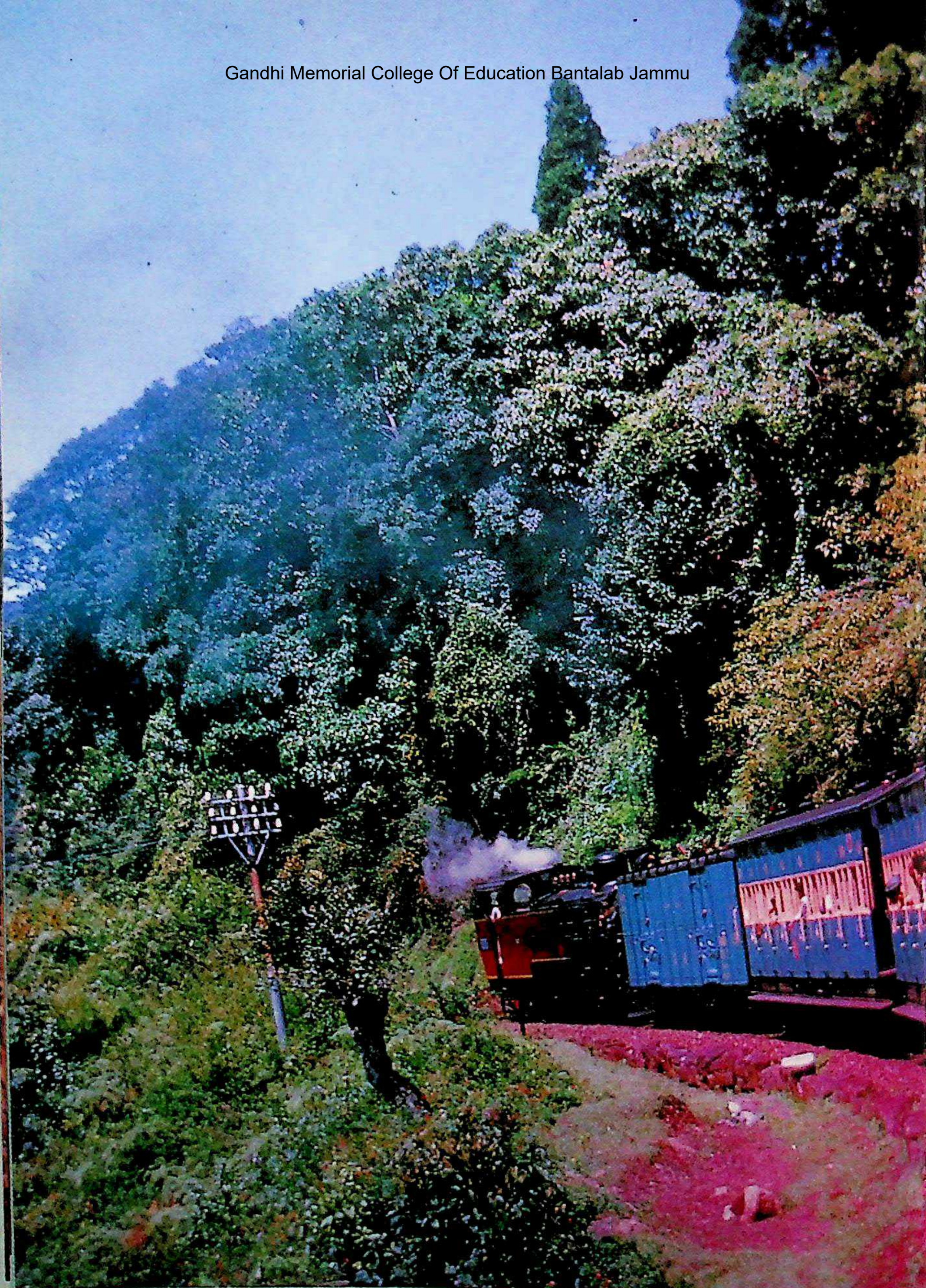
By contrast the hard seats and down market clientele of the *Tirupati Passenger* from Guntakal betoken a more asthmatic mode of arrival by metre gauge. Yet this most marvellous of lowly passengers provided a whole string of delights starting with the beautifully painted YP locomotives shedded at Guntakal. We stopped at every station and each had an onomatopoeic ring that seems unique to the Telugu language. Aware that I was tape-recording the sound and motion of condemned steam, the crew fairly thrashed the old number between stationsand as a bonus when leaning out of the window to catch the echo of an inside curve I had my bottom pinched by a eunuch.

For the traveller impressed by Indian Railways' mechanical achievements there is no more memorable line than the climb over the Eastern Ghats from Visakhapatnam to Kirindul. This broad gauge ore line trundles from the coast into far out tribal territory and the daily train is "mixed" which means the passenger carriages are attached to a goods train.

For choice No. 4 let's go with one of the daily subcontinental marathon runners, the *Kerala Mangala Express*. She gives extraordinary value for money as her 20 coaches cleave some 3000 km from the stuffy colonial capital of India to the culturally superior capital of Kerala.

The only problem with this corridor train is that it knocks you out of shape owing to the procession of Southern Railway waiters who pass up and down selling hot snacks. (They all answer to the name of "Thomas".)

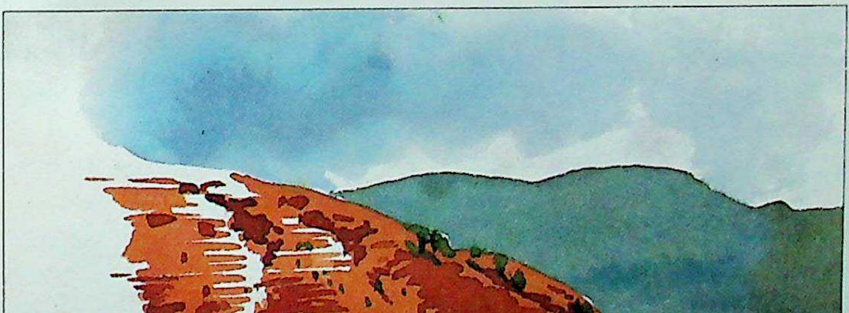
Time now to think of the narrow gauge and here the field is embarrassingly rich, for most of the lines display zany



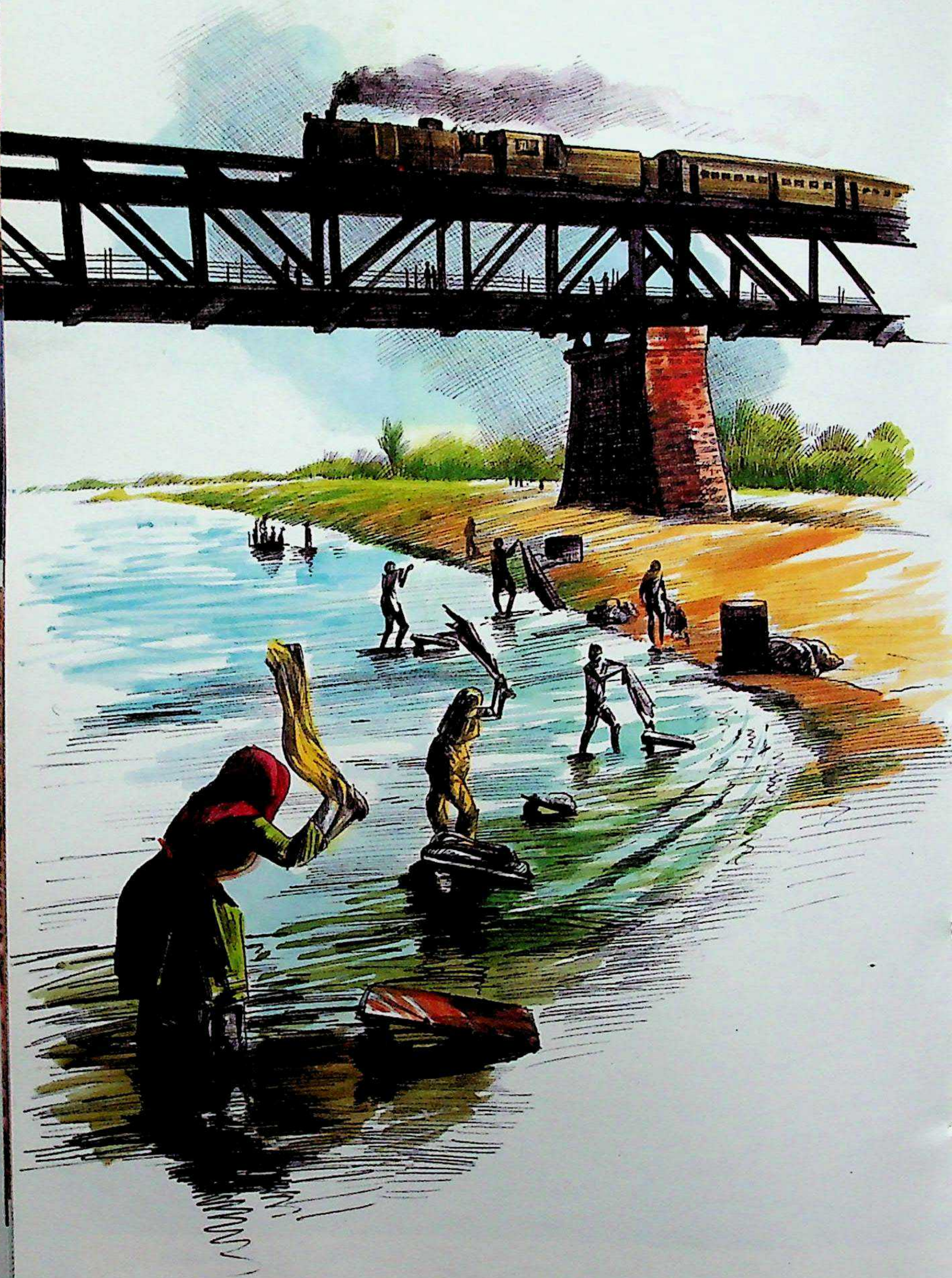
Kalka-Simla Toy Train.

attributes. ("Keep the compartment windows open in a storm to avoid capsizing of carriage.")

The narrowest of them all runs on a gauge of 0' 0''. This is the weird Patiala mono rail engine which gets up steam for VIPs at the Delhi Rail Museum . Let's board the toy train to Darjeeling that for over 100 years has daily been taking on the might of the Eastern Himalayas. The ride to Darjeeling is unbeatable in demonstrating the big-heartedness of ancient locomotives that fuss and wheeze without the help of a rack, a passage half way to Everest base camp. The climax of Kanchenjunga's ethereal spread makes this an unforgettable journey.



Kangra Valley Express.



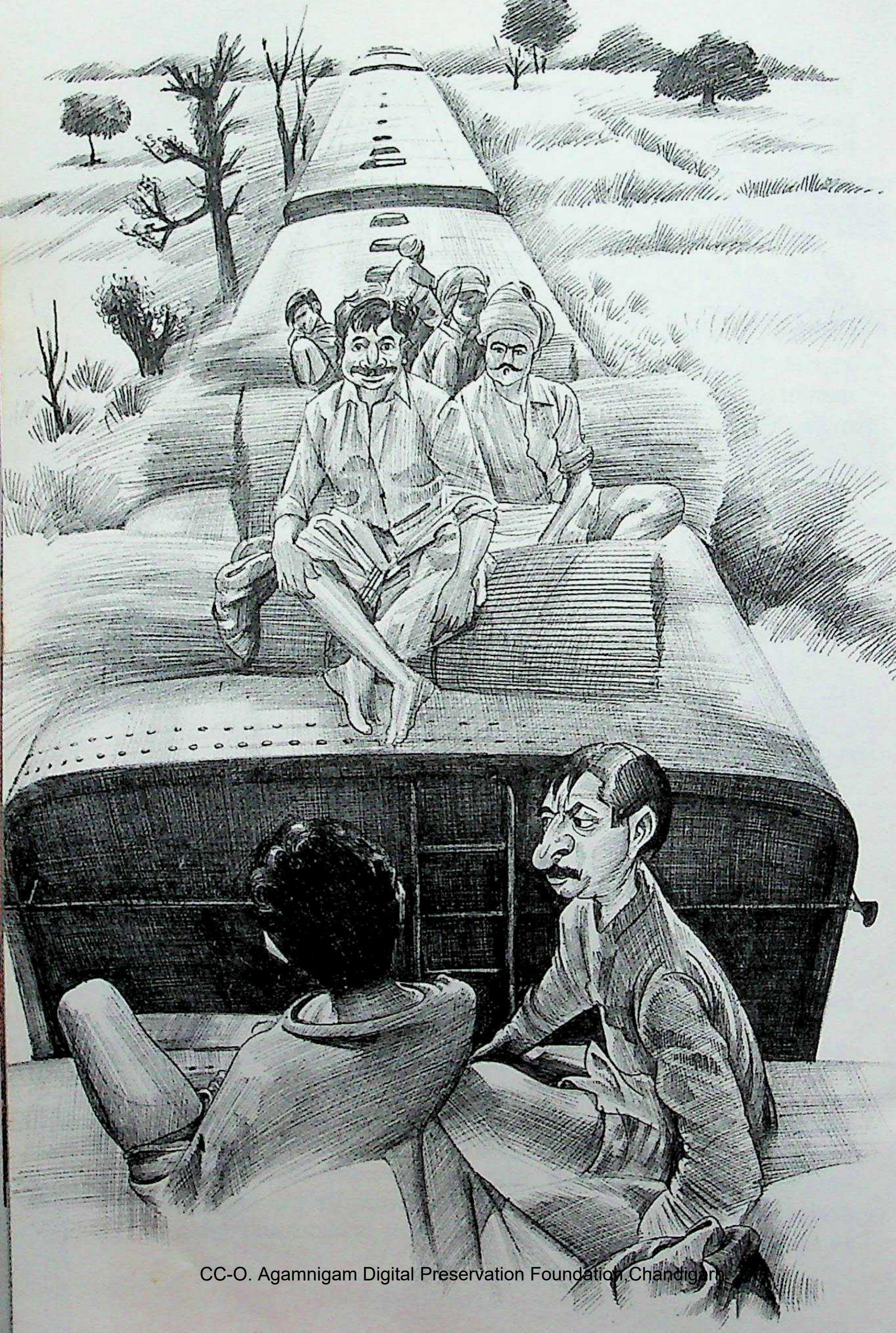
Indian Railways is not short of scenic lines and the Kangra Valley line in Himachal in my opinion beats them all for narrow gauge drama. The *Kangra Valley Express* from Pathankot to Baijnath runs parallel to the snowy Dhaula Dhar chain and passes through glorious greenery over some death-defying bridges.

In order to appease professional Indian Railwaymen who chafe at the continual exposure of these nostalgic (and unremunerative) lines, we must include a "Superfast" in our list. Frankly I found the inaugural *Shatabdi Express* that wafts the Taj tourist to Agra from Delhi in two hours too bland to be memorable. It was as anonymous as air travel with the added indignity of plastic airline food. Let's plump therefore for that prestigious old faithful, the *Deccan Queen*, purring down the Western Ghats behind the latest WAP electric loco. With all the early morning Bombay businessmen tucked behind their *Times (of India)* this could be a Brit Rail *Intercity* except for the absence of bowler hats.

There is no question about it to the dedicated train traveller. Most of the truly memorable Indian journeys are away from the polish and prestige of the urban centres. With my "top three" left to last I find all of them belong to the rural metre gauge and each of them provides remarkable scenic rewards. The third of this trinity is the *Rameshwaram Express* from Madras that takes you on an overnight cultural spree of the temple rich Kaveri delta.

The run out across the open sea to the temple island of Rameshwaram is a thrilling conclusion. Earlier the line ran another 20 km along a slender sandy spit to Dhanushkodi to link with the steamer ferry to Colombo. A storm wiped out the track and railway colony in 1965 but you can still walk in its ghostly footsteps. No finer marine scenery could be imagined.

Runner-up in my most memorable journey contest has to be the "Bamboo Line" that penetrates the dense jungles of Assam and emerges into the golden serenity of riverine Bengal — from Lumding across the North Cachar Hills by the *Barak Valley Express*. Everything about this journey is sumptuous — from the luxurious fronds that brush your carriage to the fresh pineapple available on the station platforms. Mechanically the line is just as impressive with a superlative array of bridges and tunnels

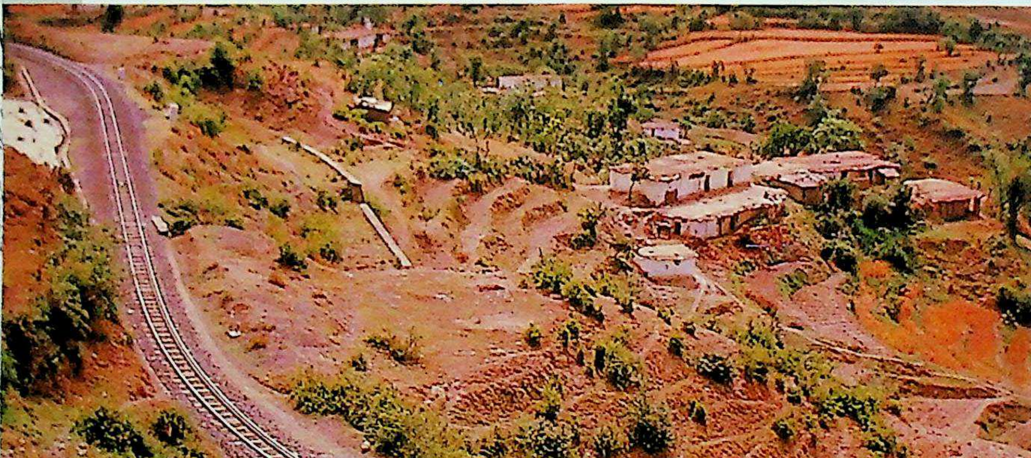


that manage by their quality to add to the exotic appeal. I returned along the track by a more exposed alternative. A compassionate guard on a goods train gave me a lift on his caboose. Then to cap my glee the inspector of the permanent way, honking to overtake on his motorized trolley, transported me back to Lumding over the giddying gorges.

Finally to the journey that nestles up in my memory as the ideal way to imbibe India, a rail passage hassle-free, variety packed and totally relaxed; a journey that seemed to add a cubit to one's soul. The train is the *Meenakshi Express* and she happens to cover the longest route on the metric system, 1,462 km from Jaipur in Rajasthan to Hyderabad in the Deccan. The second class sleeper coach was clean and spacious, one's fellow passengers made excellent companions and the traverse down the spine of India was a classic voyage in discovering railway delights. The food served on board was plentiful and tasty, the tea at the wayside halts laced with cardamom and the steam locomotives of the South Central were superbly maintained. To top it all, on this memorable diagonal linking north and south we always ran ahead of time.

TRACKING DOWN INDIA

JUG SURAIYA



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It is a mobile country within a country : every day a million passengers and almost a million tons of freight travel by 11,000 trains on a 63,000 km network of tracks covering 7,000 stations and used for journeys totalling 1.5 million km. A vast enterprise employing 1.7 million people, powered alternately by super-fast electric locomotives and smoke-belching steam engines, it spans dusty plains, mountain passes, lush paddy fields, and teeming cities. It is, literally, a nation on the move.

Indian railways have generated their own mythology of which the statistics, impressive as they are, are no more than mere mantras. As anyone who has undertaken a typical rail journey in India can testify, the reality is even more overwhelming than the hyperbole of the arithmetic that seeks to sum it up. The great Indian railway bazaar is a goblin market of sights, sounds, smells and shoves, and a large train station reflects the functioning anarchy of the country.

Porters bent double under teetering pyramids of luggage. Pilgrims bearing votive garlands and vessels of holy water. Safari-suited businessmen. Saffron-robed sadhus. Scampering urchins. Wide-eyed villagers. Swarms of flies. Vendors shouting their wares, from bananas to brass utensils. Microphones cackling a babel of announcements in Hindi, English and the regional language. Enveloping all, the indefinable scent of engine oil, hot metal, and distant places.

A signal flashes, the whistle sounds, and carriages shudder into motion. Magically, bedlam falls into place and the train becomes a transient, self-enclosed community with its own history, traditions, and rites of passage.

The history of India's railways is almost as confusing as the start of a journey today. Fact and fable jostle for attention. Was the much-celebrated 33 km excursion from Bombay's Bori Bunder to Thane on April 16, 1853, really the first locomotive run in Asia? Or should that honour go to a temperamental engine called Thomason, used two years before to build the Ganga Canal near Roorkee?

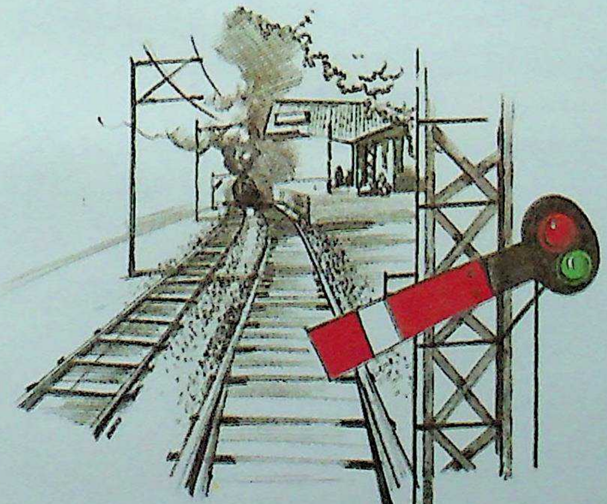
Be that as it may, by 1863 the BB and CIR (Bombay, Baroda, and Central Indian Railway, also known as the "Bloody, Bad and Can't Improve Railway") was chugging full steam ahead. The steel tracks reinforced the rigid caste hierarchy of the Raj.

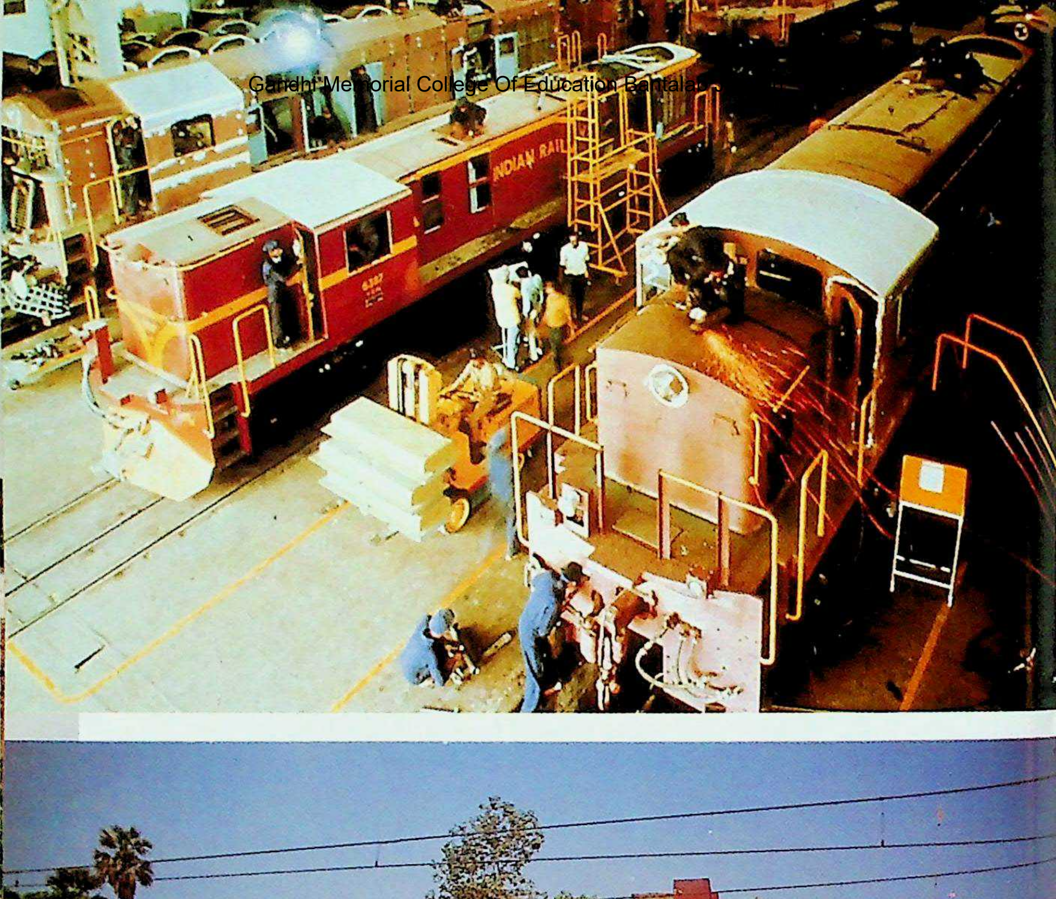
57 to 64
पू 3

While the Governor of Bombay travelled in a double-decker luxury saloon, including drawing room, dining room and servants' quarters, the native populace went third and even fourth-class.

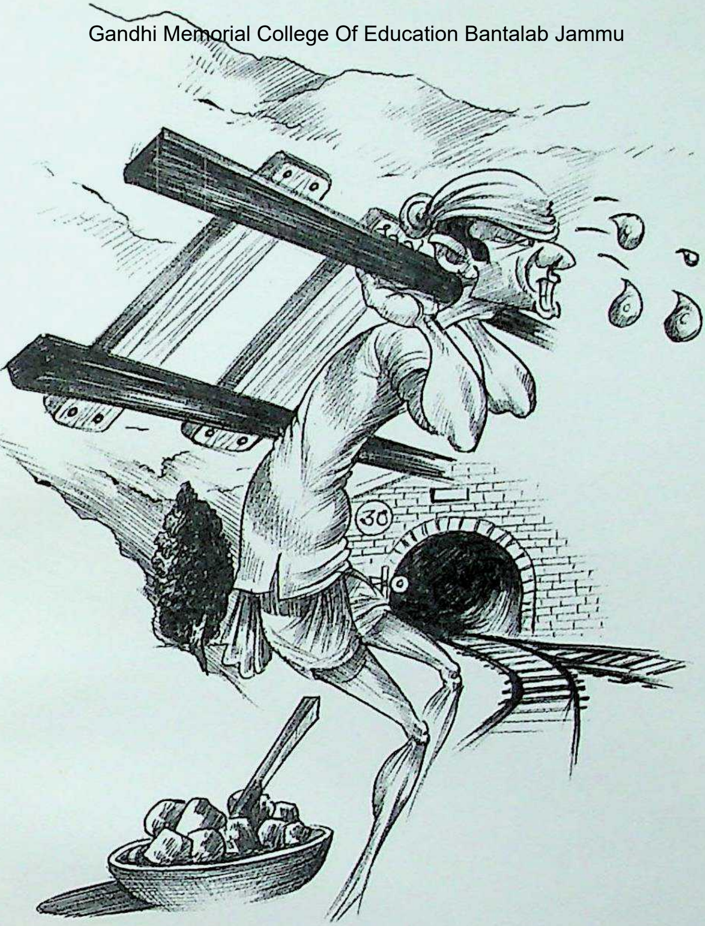
The overcrowded, insanitary conditions endured in lower-class carriages were appalling. The coaches had no lavatories. The complaint book on the Katwa-Ahmadpur line records: "Beloved Sir, I am arrive by passenger train and my belly is too much swelling with jack fruit. I am therefore went to privy. Just as I am doing the nuisance that guard making whistle blow for train to go off and I am running with *lota* in one hand and *dhoti* in next when I am fall over and display all my shockings."

First-class travel, reserved for Europeans, was a different kettle of fish: grilled to perfection and served with all the trimmings. "Soda water is offered to you just as you are conceiving the wish of it. Tea comes punctually at 6 a.m. You get a little breakfast of eggs and bacon with bananas and oranges at eight, a delightful tiffin in the heat of noon, and a good dinner at sunset," noted a satisfied British traveller in 1903.




INDIAN RAIL
ANCHOR
Anchor
BULBS & TUBES
पश्चिम

Above : Diesel locomotive workshop in Varanasi.
Below : Electric suburban services operate from Victoria Terminus Station, Bombay.



The railways were run by the rulers, for the rulers. They facilitated troop movements, opened new captive markets for British goods, and impressed the local population with yet another symbol of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Indeed many of the engineering feats involved were remarkable. The 25 - km Bhor Ghat route in Western India employed 42,000 workmen to battle with gradients of 1 in 37, while the Kalka-Simla line — known as "Mr Kipling's Railway" because of the frequency with which he used it — required 103 tunnels totalling 8 km in length.

These achievements, however, exacted a heavy price in financial and human terms. A visitor described the indentured labourers thus: "Each of these bent men might be carrying his own cross to a far-off place of execution... the path is a solitude

Darjeeling's famous narrow-gauge "toy train" at the station.

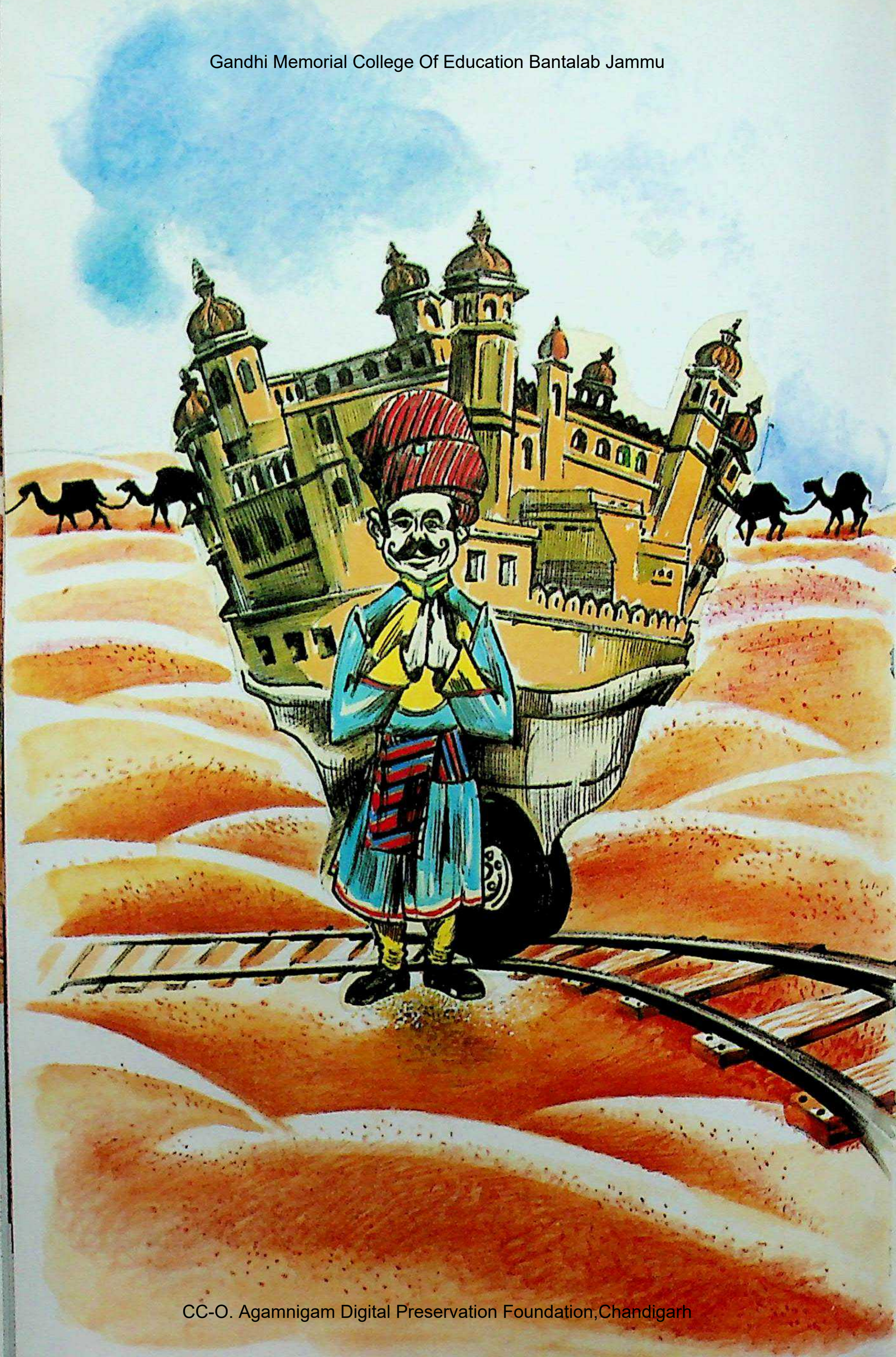
among bare and pitiless hills... and in its dust, many have dropped and died."

But even as they welded the vast country into a cohesive economic and administrative unit, the rails began to sing the anthem of a growing nationalism encouraged by the expanding system of communications. Without the trains Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi might not have achieved the mass following he commanded. True to his principles of simple living, he always travelled third-class. Eventually this necessitated the entire coach to be reserved for him for security reasons, a practice which caused Sarojini Naidu to remark that it cost the nation a lot to keep the Mahatma in the poverty to which he was accustomed.

At about the same time that Gandhi was making his historic journeys, an unknown Indian also stood up for his rights on a train. A middle-aged businessman travelling first-class — by then Indians were allowed, though on sufferance, into this once exclusively European preserve — pulled the emergency chain and kept the Toofan Mail stalled till a British colonel's wife, who had brought a large Alsatian dog into the compartment against regulations, was made to get off. That man was my father.

With Independence, the railways were caught up in the violent spasms of Partition. Coaches carrying refugees across the borders were attacked by mobs in an orgy of carnage, searingly depicted in Khushwant Singh's classic novel *A Train to Pakistan*. But as the nation settled, the railways — including 21 private lines run by princely states — were reorganized into a truly Indian institution. Inevitably, they lost much of their British "starch", but more than made up for this in terms of sheer physical growth and mystique. In the 1950s and '60s, it became almost mandatory for that other great vehicle of mass communication in modern India, the Bombay talkie, to include a romantic interlude shot on a train. A typical sequence uses Darjeeling's famous narrow-gauge "toy train" as a setting: the hero, sitting second-class, can hope to glimpse his beloved, travelling first-class, only when the train winds through the celebrated Ghoom loop.

But the real romance of the rails lies in the discovery of India as seen through a train window — an ever-changing tableau of bewildering diversity, like a travelogue in which the reels have



not only got jumbled but are also being played at erratic speeds, from frenzied fast-forward to indolent, infuriating slow motion.

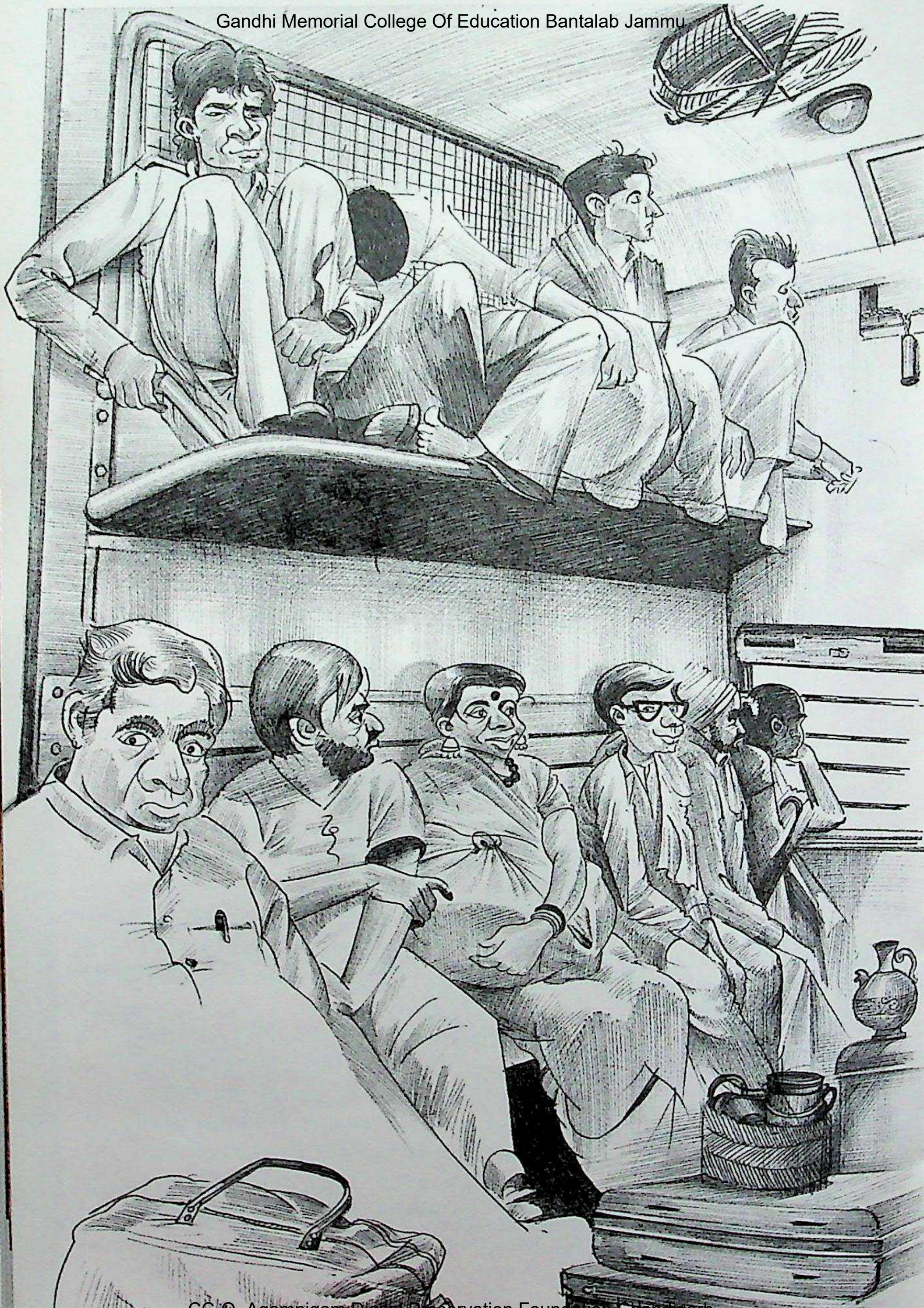
The most conformable, and certainly the most convenient, way for the foreign visitor to ensure a ringside seat for this passing show is by getting an Indrail pass. These passes, purchasable only by non-residents paying in foreign exchange, are available at major railway stations and travel agents and are valid for periods ranging from seven to 90 days. For confirmed reservations, bookings have to be made at least three months in advance.

Thirty-two recommended itineraries, ranging from seven to 30 days, include options like the"Mixed Architecture Temple—Hill Beach Wild Life Tour." Holders of Indrail passes can travel on any line, including the superfast fully air-conditioned Rajdhani — India's premier service, operating six days a week to and from Delhi to both Bombay and Calcutta — and the more recently introduced Shatabdi Express which runs daily from Delhi to Jhansi, via Agra and Gwalior and is claimed to be the fastest in the country.

For true railway buffs the magical draw continues to be India's treasure trove of antique steam locomotives, mainly narrow gauge. Till 1922 the country had 99 "little railways" of which a few still survive at least until the year 2000 when the glorious age of steam will disappear by official fiat.

The 1873 "Little Scotsman", Samrat Ashoka, once of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway and reckoned the world's oldest running loco, still chugs into service every cane-cutting season at the Saraya Sugar Mills near Gorakhpur. Sightseers are accorded a wary welcome after an over-enthusiastic visitor pinched the brass plate giving the name of the maker of the old engine.

The oldest surviving locomotive in perfect working order in the world is in the Rail Transport Museum in Delhi. Made in 1855 by Kitson, Thompson and Hewitsen of Leeds, the Fairy Queen was used to haul mail trains between Howrah and Ranigunge, making the 193-km journey in only five hours. Put out to pasture in 1909, it has been perfectly restored and occasionally steams through the museum yard just to show that they don't make them like that any more.



The Gaekwad of Baroda's state railway, which began operating in 1862, constitutes the largest collection of narrow-gauge steam locos in the world, several still in public use on minor lines between Baroda and Bombay. While exploring these smaller routes, the traveller is well advised to equip himself with adequate supplies of drinking water, food rations and, perhaps most important of all, patience. Unscheduled stoppages, ranging from 10 minutes to a like number of hours, are the rule rather than the exception and can be caused by anything and everything from a collapsed bridge to a wayward elephant on the tracks.

On such occasions you will find your co-passengers even more amenable than before to help pass the time by discussing the state of the world, playing a game of cards, sharing a meal or attempting a spot of amateur palmistry (the only taboo question: tell me, when will I finally get off this train?). As a member of this random community you soon develop a sense of belonging — and an insight into the remark that the railways in India are more than just a way of life, they are a life of permanent way.

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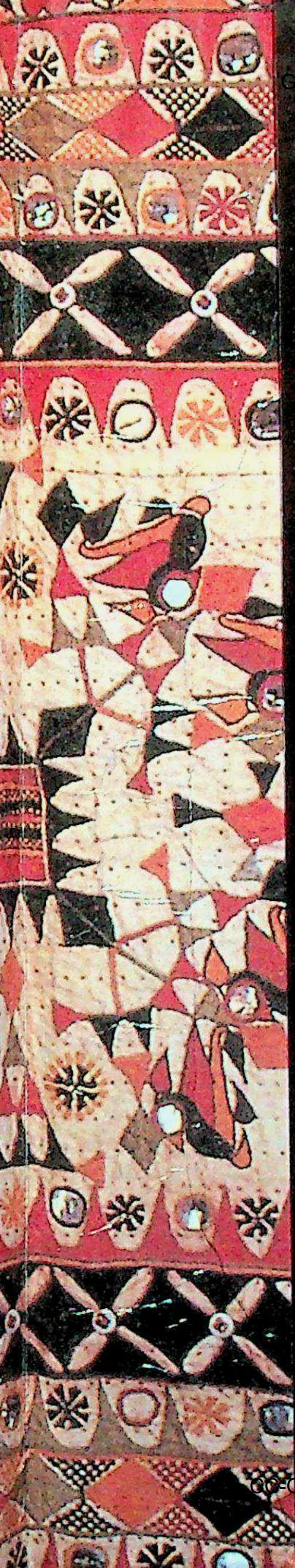

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